Department of Cultural Research & Studies

ISLAMIC ARTS

Heritage Identity and Globalized Society

Proceedings of the International Symposium
Doha Cultural Dialogue
Seventh Doha Cultural Festival
March, 2008

Translated from Arabic by Mohamed Trabelsi
Ed. Abdelouadoud El Omrani

The Moslem artists created an Islamic vision specific to them and which considers that the goal of art does not consist in imitating nature, that the imitation is not the base of the value work of art, and that quite to the contrary it is based on the creativity. It is a question of creating a new world which can be different, even contradictory with the sensory demonstrations of nature, and even with its reality. They discovered indeed that the work of art exceeds the manifestations of the "world represented and the told history; it is an organized world and a world in miniature where the forms and the colors take their places according to the latent reasons in a work of art and not with an aim of miming nature.

Dr. Amal Nasr

Our problem today depends on two factors: the first one is to make sure that the Arabic thought stops interiorizing the image which the Orientalism anchored, and the second consists in rationally integratingpainting and Arabic art into the world art history. The first way is somehowclosely relatedto the second; because, if we succeeded in clearingthe way for Arabic art through the universal artistic context, all what is left is to promote this intellectual orientation via the modern media. As a result, if we want to get rid of the complex of historic inferiority in art, it isnecessary for us to reviewour historyfrom an archaeological perspective far from any doctrinal confinement or any colonial ideology.

Prof. Moulim Laroussi

Ministry of Culutre, Sports

Department of Cultural Research & Studies

Doha - Qatar

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الفنون الإسلامية، بين هويّة التراثي ومجتمع العولمة

P.O.Box 23700, Doha.

Tel. +974.44022789

Legal Deposit No.: 2015 / 404

ISBN: 978 / 9927 / 122 / 17 / 0

First Edition 2016

Al-founoun Al-islamiyyah, bayna Houwiyyat Atturathi wa Mujtamaa Al-awlamah

Presentation

This book, which consists of several articles, provides an interesting comparative study about the aesthetic approach between Islamic art and Western art, so to speak.

The authors invite us to rediscover ourselves when we juxtapose our arts with the arts of other civilizations. The way we see the world also influences our approach to spatial dimensions and the way we perceive it.

The golden sky and the perspective are not just two different ways of treating the background, but they are two characteristics of two different ways of seeing the world; one affirms the priority forms of pictorial space, while the other uses the space as an element which sensory experience and prevailing materialism of the human being is based on. So the space absorbs and assimilates human forms. They represent images in a continuous spatial context; this is what clearly appears in the art of the Renaissance.

Having addressed the most diverse facets of Islamic Art, this book is undoubtedly a reference work that defers our knowledge in this area, and opens horizons to further researches.

The book also suggests more than one course and more than one methodology: Re-interpreting Orientalism; Islamic arts between inspiration and plagiarism, Divergence as personal work or search for identity, Islamic arts in the era of globalization, Arts as a field of conflict of civilizations or dialogue of cultures, Calligraphy yesterday and today, Islamic architecture and history.

We sincerely hope that this work of great scientific and artistic value will help to enrich the debates as the diversity of our arts has enriched our common human heritage!

Department of Cultural Research and Studies
Ministry of Culture and Sports

Reinterpreting Orientalism

Islamic artistic image in Italian painting during the Renaissance

Prof. Zinat Bitar

Notwithstanding its trends and the motivations of its supporters and sponsors, the issue of the reinterpretation of Orientalism in general, and the proposal of new visions about its methods, its concepts and objectives are prominent in the scientific and intellectual contemporary literature.

Orientalism is a major element in the axis of the relationship between the West on one side and the East with its civilizations on the other side. In this context, artistic Orientalism bears – since the 70s - a renewed topicality in the space of Western and Arab contemporary Orientalist thought. During the last two decades, the movement of museums, fairs, Arab and global art markets has experienced a vital resurgence in supply, sale and study of Orientalist artworks, both European and American. Thus, researchers are invited to take advantage of this cognitive and visual dynamism. It confirms, in fact, the importance of investing these new realities in the field of introspection and analysis of artistic Orientalism with its schools, reading keys and articulations. It's an approach that should be part of the efforts tending to get closer to the essence of this cultural phenomenon appeared at the pace of the laws of historical process in the West and the East from ancient times till nowadays. A rereading of Orientalist art discourse at the start of the third millennium is imposed on us by the conditions of development of new studies in history and art history, as well as the ever-growing economic and political interest that the West shows towards this part of the East (including the American and European projects of economic and political stranglehold on oil resources, new geopolitical reconfiguration and attempted balkanization in sectarian and religious antagonistic entities.) This rereading is also necessary because of the mobility of museums and auction houses specialized in Western and Orientalist art that traveled to countries in the Arabian Gulf. These include among others: the Louvre in Abu Dhabi, Christie's and Sotheby's in Dubai, and the dynamic movement of the museums in Qatar.

Frenzied global mutations in the field of science, technology and means of visual communication have opened the door to enormous cognitive opportunities. They allow renewing and adjusting the historical relationship between the West and the East. Recent studies and historical and artistic research have shed light over important parts of the

history of this relationship marked by differences, and by cognitive richness. Among the most important attempts, there are exhibitions of Orientalist art in the United States[11] and France that unveiled two fundamental episodes in the history of Orientalism and to which researchers and interested parties have paid little attention: Orientalism in Italian art and American art. By virtue of specialized studies about artistic Orientalism, We think that these new visual data and research resulting from the above-mentioned exhibitions will be of a great help in the reformulation of an Orientalist artistic image, throughout its chronological evolution since the Crusades until the American invasion of Iraq.

An objective observation of Orientalist iconography inevitably induces us to trace back the premature sources of the earliest appearances of Islamic artistic influence on Western art. It is obviously about Italian Renaissance Era with its three stages: the Pre-Renaissance; the High Renaissance; and the Late Renaissance. In fact, Islamic artistic influence initially appeared in the arts of the Italian Renaissance for several reasons the most important ones are:

First: business, political and military relations between the Italian cities and the ports and countries of the Arab-Muslim world of the Mediterranean Basin have existed for a long time and date back to 828 when Venice presided over these relations.

Second: the fundamental contribution of the Venetian, Genoese, Neapolitan and others in the financing of the Crusades. The fruits reaped by these material and spiritual campaigns contributed to revive the arts during what we call the Renaissance. This rapid expansion was incarnated by means of the economic evolution and the accumulation of fortunes, translation, acquisition of Islamic works of art, (the imitation and the import of the Islamic artistic techniques which were widespread then) during the Fatimid, the Ayyubid , the Mamluk eras , and the beginning of the Ottoman era (glass, copper, bronze, fabrics, ceramic and all kinds of decorative arts, carpets, jewels etc.)

Third: the spiritual influence (role of the Roman Catholic Church in Rome) on the Oriental Church in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and in Egypt after the Crusades, as well as the emergence of missionaries and evangelization. Then, the fall of Byzantium in the hands of Ottoman State in 1453 historically coincided with the stages of the Pre-Renaissance and the High Renaissance in Italy. These facts inevitably induce us to review the Islamic influence on new types and artistic genres in the schools of Rome, Florence, and Venice (in particular the impact of Mamluk arts on Italian arts.)

Fourth: the predominance of Venice in trade over the Islamic world, and in particular over the Ottoman State brought the development of artistic Orientalism in works of artists of the School of Venice, particularly visible during the Late Renaissance and the early expansion of Ottoman art.

Fifth: the influence of Italian artistic Orientalism on European schools as attracting

themes to European artists studying art there (German, British, French, Russian, Spanish and American schools.)

Artistic Orientalism at the time of the Italian Renaissance deserves that we concentrate again on its concepts, stages and founding effects in the movement of European and American art, because of the commercial and economic role which have presided over the Italian political ,religious and ideological roles in the Islamic East since the ninth century. The relation between art and economy ,is indeed, an equation which has always been present in the history of Italian cities. Trade played an essential and central role in the development of the artistic language in Venice, Genoese and Sicily because life in these coastal cities revolved around trade with the East and the West. So, striking of currency and golden coins was moved to Venice in 1284.Maritime fleets and geographical discoveries have had fundamental effects in heaping up fortunes, development of arts, and the emergence of Islamic art collections.

After being crystallized as a general cultural phenomenon, studying artistic Orientalism in Western arts again and its reinterpretation can be effectively limited ,in our opinion, to two main events: the Crusades (1089-1298) and the American invasion of Iraq to plunder its goods , material and spiritual wealth (1991-2003).

This historic demarcation brings us to redefine the evolutionary process of artistic Orientalism in European schools of art. In the light of numerous data and document information, we can, thus, define the character of this cultural phenomenon in every Orientalist art school separately.

We cannot study artistic Orientalism as a cultural diversified and complex phenomenon , having multiple cognitive strata unless it is linked to economic, political, religious and cultural roots and frames that historically constituted the main starting point of the relation between the Islamic East and the West.

In fact, European art in all its genres and types (architecture, painting , sculpture, decorative arts) was developed during periods of economic prosperity in the country of origin. Orientalism in its turn, as an artistic phenomenon has been developed and shaped in echo or as *somma* or a result of the relation of some Western countries with Islamic East in the course of ages. In European and American artistic schools, artistic Orientalism varied according to fluctuation in business, political and religious relations between every European country apart and some parts of the East.

That’s how we noticed the preponderance of Islamic artistic motives in Italian, French and American art Orientalism, and Chinese oriental motives in English and German romantic schools as well.

When we try to closely study the stages and periods in the course of which

oriental artistic motives appeared in Western art, we find that they began to follow the stage of the appearance of the cognitive specialization in European Orientalist schools. This specialization has arose from the principle of the concentration of colonial and commercial interests since the XVIIth century (after Great Britain 's seizure of India and the Middle East). As for the privileges of France and Italy, they were sealed in wilayas of the Ottoman State since the XVIth century, and lasted up to half of the XVIIth century, when America entered as a partner willing to inherit commercial and cognitive power in this part of Islamic East. This newcomer will also inherit the artistic position chaired during the Renaissance by Italy as the centre of European arts and artists .It will compete with French position in the XIXth and at the beginning of the XXth century; New York having become the center of the world artistic mobility today.

And so appears to the researcher the nature of Oriental-Islamic artistic image in Western art. The map and the development of artistic Orientalism witnessed changes in European and then American space-time following the same upward curve of economic and political prosperity of such and such Western State in Islamic East.

According to the research methodology of frames and specificities of artistic Orientalism as a cultural phenomenon rooted in the West-East relation, certain studies and exhibitions which have recently appeared at first in Paris then in the United States (in particular *Venice and The Orient* exhibition) shed light on essential aspects of form and content of this phenomenon. So, today the reinterpretation of Orientalism imposes on us to exploit data of this exhibition and its studies made in the light of new historical documents, as well as works of Italian artists as Orientalist productions of Renaissance which did not benefit in the past from specialized research. These works also revealed important aspects of the influence of Islamic art on Italian art during the Renaissance.

It should be noted that the reinterpretation of Orientalism is rapidly expanding today in the West because of the density and the depth of Oriental-Islamic presence in the structure of Western, European and American artistic thought. This reinterpretation is a discovery, a research and a scientific recognition of the role of Islamic East, its civilization, arts and philosophy in the emergence of Western artistic Renaissance. The process comes within the context of getting to know *the other*, as a recognition of his knowledge, and the acknowledgment of the *other* on the role of Islamic East, its civilization, arts and philosophy in the emergence of European and American artistic Renaissance. Although methods and processes of this reinterpretation differ from a researcher to another , they all began to admit the necessity to review the previous position, set apart some rare exceptions.

These researches and exhibitions have confirmed today that Islamic artistic Orientalism is a classic artistic phenomenon in European art. It consists in the penetration

of effects, artistic images, ideas and Oriental mythology in European art since the IXth century. It ,therefore, seems that artistic Orientalism is not a temporary phenomenon stemming from an artistic fashion or arising from the impressions left by the Campaign of Bonaparte in Egypt and in the East; it rather, played a formative and a founding role in the structure of European art during the Italian Renaissance (architecture, sculpture, decorative arts). It is not possible to reinterpret artistic Orientalism without examining in depth the foundations of fluctuating variables that marked the West-Orient relationship after the succession of Christianity and Islam in Middle Ages.

Islamic artistic image: form , content, transformation and modulation of the image

Italy, leader of Islamic Orientalism during the Renaissance (the School of Florence, the School of Rome, the School of Venice).

Islamic artistic motif dominated Italian art during the Renaissance following the Crusades and following the displacement of the center of trade relations with Islamic East (the Mameluk State, the Ottoman State and the Safavid state in Iran) towards Italy. It has resulted in the expansion of commercial and cultural exchanges and interactions with Islamic East in Italian cities of Genoa, Venice and Pisa as well as in Tuscany and elsewhere . France being engaged in the War of Hundred Years with England, the artistic Renaissance delayed to appear there, and could not immediately reap the fruits of the Crusades. The first fruits of bourgeois relations appeared in Italy after the accumulation of capitals coming from wars and trade with the East. This historical reality delayed the control of France and its hegemony over trade relations with the East until the XVIth century.

We should note that the appearance of the Islamic artistic motif in the painting of the Italian Renaissance vary from one school to another. Variations were visible in places of its emergence in Italian artistic schools (schools of Florence, Rome and Venice) ,in the stages of its expansion in Italian culture and art themselves : the Pre-Renaissance; the High Renaissance; and the Late Renaissance. Indeed, the competition between administrative centers of the art of the Renaissance and their movement between the North, the Center and the South of Italy echoed the economic prosperity of such or such State and the expansion of trade with Islamic East. If we try today to establish the relation between the first use of Islamic artistic motif in Italian painting and its late or advanced one, we shall find that the map of appearance of this motif is organically and historically linked to the context of the ascending spreading of Italian art schools (Florence, Rome and Venice) with its three stages: premature, high and late. This urges us to look for incentives and motivations behind the development of Islamic Orientalist artistic image, the axes of its genesis and at the level of ideas and forms. Besides, Islamic artistic effects

were adapted and imitated in Italian art of the Renaissance according to contemporary artistic constraints. We so note that Islamic artistic motif appeared in artistic genres the most spread at that time and the most known in Italian artistic school. It is present in the historic painting and the Christian religious frescoes (representing the life and the passion of Jesus Christ, the Virgin , and Oriental Saints and Apostles as Saint-Mark, Saint-Georges, Saint-Stephen, Saint-Francis of Assisi and others). The Islamic motif also appeared in the art of the portrait, the natural landscape, the nude, and life scenes and the context during the Late Renaissance, the Baroque, the Rococo (or the late Baroque) etc..

From Giotto's Orientalism to Carpaccio: trade, religion and philosophy.

In our reinterpretation of artistic Orientalism, we find out that there are two cornerstones which stimulated the appearance of Islamic artistic effects in painting during the Renaissance: trade and religion. What is significant in these new data, is the documented discovery of the close relation between merchants and religious frescoes in churches and Italian edifices during the Italian Renaissance. Indeed, important Italian merchants controlling trade with Islamic East , financed the execution of religious frescoes in churches and public edifices. It is a well-known fact which deserves that we allow a big attention to the dialectic of its material and spiritual relationship with the East.

On one side, Islamic and artistic crafts (glassware, copper, bronze, ceramic, fabrics, carpets, jewels, encrusted woodworks etc.) were unloaded at the ports of Venice, Genoa and Tuscany to be exported to Italian cities and other North-European States (Germany, Scandinavia, England, Russia and the others). On the other side, portraits of Saints and Oriental Apostles began to appear on the walls of churches , academies and some public edifices: the Patron Saint Mark of Venice, the Patron Saint George of Byzantium and the Patron Saint-Stephen in touch with Jerusalem. Images of the Saints about the Crusades as Saint Francis of Assisi also came out. At this same period when these appearances constituted the foundation of Italian painting of the Renaissance, emerged also the signs of modernization and evolution of the pictorial techniques and the revival of literature and philosophy in the Italian thought in general (Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio). The triad of Renaissance thus consisted of trade, religion and philosophy, and it led to the era of artistic ideology.

Thus the Italian Renaissance which included miscellaneous aspects of Italian thought and culture ,exploited Islamic scientific achievements and philosophic creations and Arabic translations of Greek philosophy (Avicenna, Averroes or Ibn Roshd, Aboul Alaa al-Maarri, al-Ghazali, Ibn Masarrah, Ibn Arabi and others). We witnessed the appearance of a clear ideological stand about Islam in Italian philosophy and literature,

which was reproduced in paintings during the three stages. During the first stage Dante and *The Divine Comedy* was largely influential on the thinking and vision of Giotto DI Bondone, a pioneer of mural painting of the Renaissance and of artistic Orientalism in the art of Christian religious painting during the Renaissance.

Islamic artistic image in Christian religious painting during the Pre-Renaissance and the theory of contradiction between Islam and the Christendom

Giotto di Bondone, a contemporary of Dante is considered as the founder and one of the pillars of Italian artistic Pre-Renaissance; his name is strictly linked to artistic creations which were a historic transition in the evolution of European plastic image and its technique. He is also the first one to have introduced the image of Oriental Muslim in the composition of the historic painting, and one of the first artists to have joined the Franciscans and to have painted their saint, Francis of Assisi in his home town Assisi (monumental painting of the High Basilica, Assisi). He painted several chapters of this saint's life who participated in the Fifth Crusade in 1219 and visited the Egyptian city of Damietta. The popular Christian legend and some historic sources say that he met the Sultan al-Kamel to suggest him to be converted to the Christendom. This period was painted in frescoes decorating the Chapel Pazzi of Basilica Santa-Croce in Florence.

Giotto's frescoes reflected the cultural and ideological spirit prevailing in the XIVth century, based on fundamentalist Christian ideological views , directly subjugated to the power and to the politics of the Church and Feudalism, and influenced by Dante's critical stands to Islam. We see on Giotto's mural the picture of the arrogant al-Kamel, ' terrestrial ' and ' luxurious ' Sultan while in front of him stands the Saint Francis of Assisi 'ascetic', ' hermit ', modest and 'believer' whose body is not even burned by fire thanks to the depth of his faith and spiritual strength, in comparison with the terrestrial image of " Muslim Sultan ". And so appears the Islamic artistic image in contrast with the Christian from the religious-ideological content, that is of faith. It is the triad of the contradictory opposing views between Christendom and Islam starting with Dante in thought and philosophy (*The Divine Comedy*). The other aspect of this image relates to its reading today or its reinterpretation from the formal point of view, which shows that the Islamic artistic image appeared at the heart of the structural process of modernization of the techniques of paintings of the Pre-revival at forms level. Indeed the Islamic artistic image , adapted itself to the requirements and parameters of the artistic revolution on which Giotto dI Bondone's avant-gardism was based on the art of Pre-Renaissance painting. This artistic revolution bases itself on the principle of the simulation of reality (space and time), and the principle of the introduction of the local character, or to introduce into the holy land of Islamic East some historic events (suits, ethnic physical features, animals, headgears

and others).

The interest in the representation of Saint Francis of Assisi's life (between 1291 and 1296) is the natural consequence of military defeats of the Crusades in Islamic East. We shall notice that following every military-political defeat of Italy and the West versus the Islamic Oriental East, arts show the illustrations of Saints and the Christian apostles whose names relate to the Islamic East, labeling them as victorious at the moral level, the spiritual and the faithful.

The concomitance of the binomial military defeat of the Crusaders in the East and the representation of Oriental Christian Saints victory began to emerge after the fall of Acre in the hands of the Mameluk in 1291 . The echoes of this fall were enormous in Italy, particularly in Venice, where it was considered as an economic disaster much more than a Christian religious one.

It is exactly in this period that Giotto DI Bondone created the frescoes of Saint Frances of Assisi church frescoes in the basilica (1291-1296). What is special about these paintings is that they for the first time depicted the Muslim Sultan al-Kamel, the opposite picture of the Saint Frances of Assisi on fire in front of the monarch in Egypt. Giotto repainted it in the Church Santa Croce inside the Pazzi Chapel in Florence in 1317, establishing in that way the image of the defeated Muslim sultan facing the victory of Saint Francis of Assisi out of faith. Giotto established a legacy of the reversal of Islamic artistic image in the Pre-Renaissance art of painting through the misrepresentation of the Islamic military victory scene as a defeat opposed to the Christian religious victory of which the military Crusades were actually undone by Muslims.

The ascending rhythm of political events between the two contemporary poles of power controlling economy of the Mediterranean Basin, had a big influence on Italian artistic Orientalism.

This increase in the acuteness of political events and military defeats of the West versus the Islamic East was followed by a similar increase in the rhythm and the representation of the negative Islamic artistic image in its content and aesthetic form.

The philosophy played an influential and effective role as a stimulating discourse in the representation of Islamic artistic image in works by Italian artists of the time .

Since the withdrawal of the last crusader of the Islamic world in 1298 until the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Italian art dealt with multiple and various Islamic artistic creations in a fragmentary, synthetic and selective way.

We notice that Islamic artistic effects consisted of ornamental elements trimmed here and there, and inspired by such a historic religious event or by such portrayals or contemporary political event. These latter often takes a religious, ideological aspect which

places Islam in an opposing position to the Christendom " from the religious point of view " and considerable from the aesthetic and artistic point of view. We see that Islamic decorative art (geometrical, plant and animal) is present in precise religious subjects of Jesus Christ life and of The Virgin Mary as: *Adoration of the Magi*, *Flight into Egypt, The Marriage of Cana, Jesus Appearance at the Temple*.

The Italian artist often resorted to the turban, the Kaftan, to the tunic embroidered with plant motives and with decorative details stylizing the camel or the peacock, Islamic carpet, in utensils of decorated copper , ceramic and others in order to provide the general atmosphere of religious artistic work, a realistic Oriental tone which consolidates the credibility of the narrative artistic image which it represents. We quote as examples: Altichiero da Verona *Adoration of the Magi*, the fresco of Saint George's oratory in Padua 1377-1379; fresco of Saint George's oratory in Padua 1377-1379; Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi*, on 1423, Uffizi Gallery in Florence; Pisanello, Saint George's fresco in Saint Anastasia's Church in Verona 1435-1438; Masaccio and Masolino, fresco of the Brancacci Chapel in the Church Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence 1427-1428, and other artists of that time such as Beato Angelico, Sandro Botticelli, Filippino Lippi, Ghirlandaio, Pinturicchio and others .

Even if the appearance of Islamic artistic effects during the Pre-Renaissance was intermittent and selective, It, nevertheless, gives evidence of Italian artist's consciousness of the importance of aesthetics and Islamic art at that time. Indeed, Orientalism of that period cluttered with religious hostility , military and political conflicts following the Crusades confirms the knowledge the West has of Islamic art and its esthetic and ornamental values. This knowledge then would result in recognizing the Islamic art as a culture carrying an Oriental artistic thought which constitutes a model to be followed at the formal level, and a visual and technical assistant in the conception of the Christian religious artistic image during the Italian artistic Renaissance.

In time and space, the Italian artist who paints Christian historic themes was dependent on the East. It is because this Islamic East is the cradle of Christian religion, even though its cultural monuments changed throughout time.

We finally have to point out to this peculiarity which consists in resorting to Islamic artistic effects in clothes and decorations of paintings and Italian Christian religious frescoes. It consists in adapting Islamic art forms to Christian ideological content at the visual level. The Western artist needed this feature as a symbol or place indication (the land of the religious event) which is none other than the contemporary Islamic East with its style of clothes and arts acquired thanks to the succession of Oriental civilizations on its land throughout history.

So has it surpassed the gaps in time and divergences of belief between the appearance of Christian religion in the first century BCE and the re-painting of its representatives and saints after the Crusades in the XIVth century.

Islamic artistic image in the arts of Venice: disequilibrium and conceptual gap between space and time

By the end of the XVth century and the beginning of the XVIth, effects and Islamic artistic motives appeared in frescoes decorating worship rooms in churches, orders, abbeys and religious schools and their meeting rooms. The themes were inspired by religious narratives and by saints' lives and by Oriental apostles.

The frescoes of the Apse Chapel of the Church Santa Maria dei Crociferi in Venice appear among the most famous Venetian works which borrowed Oriental fashion, widespread in paintings of the Late Renaissance. They were created by three gathered artists: Cima da Conegliano, Giovanni Mansueti and Lattanzio da Rimini.

These frescoes were financially supported by the Brotherhood , the labor union of the silk *Setaioli*. This church chapel was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and Saint Mark. Its walls were decorated with four frescoes representing Saint Mark's life.

The artist Cima da Conegliano created the fresco of *Saint Mark curing the shoemaker Anianus* by moving the event of Alexandria towards contemporary Venice. The artist thus makes unwind the facts as he imagines them in Venice, while historically, they took place in Alexandria. The church Santa Maria dei Miracoli built at the heart of Venice a few years before ,has become ,through the artist's architectural space whose courtyard is the place where the Egyptian Christian religious event takes place. He so coupled the contemporary Venetian architecture with the historic religious event related to the land of Alexandria; the same Alexandria from where was transported Saint Mark's relic in the year 829 AD originally buried in the church of Alexandria.

What is widely known more than the fresco itself, is the fact of having dressed the characters surrounding Saint Mark in Mameluk clothes and with majestic turbans and Islamic togas. It is also the fact of having represented in the background these characters in Mameluk Islamic clothes an Ottoman officer riding a horse and wearing a stretched out red headgear.

Having done that, the Venetian artist threw on the Muslim heroes of his fresco a historic role with which they have no relationship, since he has something in common with episodes of Saint Mark's life which go back up to the pre-Islamic time and take place in Alexandria. Cima da Conegliano set Mameluk, who are his contemporaries, in

the image of modern local inhabitants of Saint Mark in the first century AD, even before the advent of Islam.

The Bellini family and its role in the development of the figurative and decorative Islamic artistic image in the Venetian painting

After the fall of the Byzantine Empire in the hands of the Ottomans in 1453 and the fall of Andalusia in the hands of the Europeans in 1492, the fast succession of political events in the XVth century played a central role in the penetration of Islamic influence on Italian art of the Renaissance. Gentile Bellini's visit to Istanbul on an invitation of Sultan Muhammad Al Fatih from 1479 to 1481 is one of the most important stages of the materialization of Islamic artistic image in the structure of contemporary art of the Renaissance. During his stay, Bellini painted portraits of the Sultan, and carried out several plans, drawings of Ottoman suits, edifices, exotic animals and Islamic works of art. These works played a structural role in the clarification of Islamic artistic images at the level of the form, and in their transformation at the level of content.

Even if the portraits of Sultan Muhammad al-Fatih carried-out by Bellini are considered as the foundation of artistic Orientalism in the Italian art of portrait of the Renaissance and the initial step of artistic relations with the new Ottoman State. It cannot be denied that Bellini benefited from his stay in Topkapi Palace to realize an artistic creation in the field of the religious and historic painting which was the spearhead in the charter of artistic genres during the High Renaissance in Italy.

Bellini used drawings made in Istanbul as models or specimens of the heroes of his fresco, Saint *Mark's preaching in Alexandria* produced for the Scuola grande di San Marco.

Although Gentile Bellini has never visited Alexandria or any other Islamic Middle-Eastern city after Istanbul, he, however, painted chapters of Saint Mark's life which took place in Alexandria based on travel stories of Breidenbach. He painted minarets and Mameluk suits according to the tradition of other Venetian artists and opting for realism in Oriental-Islamic artistic image. Besides, he resorted to ancient sources to collect the information about Saint Mark's life, in particular The Golden Legend (1269) of Jacques de Voragine. In this book ,the author deals with narratives and biographies of the saints in the Middle Ages and during the Renaissance. The work came out in a period marked by the defeats of the Crusades in the Islamic East.

Bellini's choice of this episode of Saint Mark's apostolic mission of spreading the rules of Christianity in the holy land ,scarcely attracted the attention of other artists before. The latter were, in fact, concentrated on episodes of the political and religious

propaganda of Saint Mark's life after the displacement of his relic from Alexandria to Venice.

Bellini painted this Christian religious event on the Saint Mark's Square of Venice in an Islamic Oriental frame where Mameluk , Ottoman architecture and human beings influence overlap the influential Roman and Christian who were their contemporaries in Venice.

He placed the crowd of believers gathered on the Saint Mark's Square to listen to Saint Mark's sermon, and set monuments of diverse cultural periods and various styles surrounding them from three sides. Bellini puts the Obelisk of Constantine(late hieroglyphic) and Diocletian's Column at the Serapeum of Alexandria next to diverse monuments, near Saint Mark 's Basilica in Venice and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople to imply the architectural background in the Church of Alexandria established by Saint Mark, and from which they got inspired to build the Saint Mark's basilica in Venice after the displacement of the Saint's relic in Venice. The architectural phase did not satisfy itself with these Christian and Roman edifices, it also included the minarets of the Mosque Ibn Touloun in Cairo with its outside staircase, the Fatimid tower of Bab Zouila, some Syro-Egyptian minarets, houses and the lighthouse of Alexandria.

The space of the painting also includes the gathered crowd of believers, on the right side people are wearing Islamic Mameluk suits and on the left, the Christian Italian suits , while Saint Mark is in the middle of the masses.

After Gentile Bellini's death in 1507, his brother Giovanni pursued this panoramic artistic work. In 1515 he undertook to paint another episode of Saint Mark's life: the fresco of the Martyr of Saint Mark (today preserved in the Galleria dell' Accademia in Venice). Giovanni died too in 1516 before having finished the fresco. After his death, his disciple Vittore Belliniano finally finished the fresco.

The fresco was created in an Islamic frame (Mameluk and Ottomans suits) which dominates the general background of the painting. The artist painted heroes with Islamic features and suits of the Heathen era during which Saint Mark knew the sacrifice. He placed the image of contemporary Muslim (Mameluk and Ottoman) in an artificial historical and religious frame, an entirely invented story and hostile towards the Christendom. They projected on the Muslim a distorted ideological and political role against the historical reality and the truth.

In Egypt the Muslims are plainly accused of the martyr of Saint Marc Christian, to have dragged his corps in the streets after his death in 62 or 63 after. J.C., and to have wanted to set it on fire. But now God sent a thundery storm which put out the fire, allowing the believers to transport the corps of the Saint and to bury it in Alexandria. For more ample details, we can go back to Michael Berry's article: " *Giorgione and the*

Moors of Venice ", p. 149, in *Venice and the East*, p. 146-173. In their historic religious paintings, the Bellini brothers were dedicated to Islamic artistic Orientalism, as they fixed the opposing, falsified, synthetic and unfavorable image of Oriental Muslim depicted as the negative hero faced with the positive hero of Saint Mark of Alexandria.

This consecration crystallized with the Italian artists, in particular Giovanni Mansueti (pupil of the brothers Bellini) who carried out parts of the episodes of the Saint's life in the Church of the Scuola San Marco. This was before his death in 1525 or 1526 and who are: *Saint Mark curing Anianus*; *Saint Mark baptizes Anianus*; *Scenes of Saint Mark's life*. In these works, the artist followed the same Orientalist artistic discourse that he practiced in the series of the episodes of Saint Mark's life produced for the Church dei Crociferi.

Carpaccio: the paroxysm of the Islamic ideologized artistic image in the conflict of the West versus of the Islamic East

The tradition of representation of the contemporary Muslims with Mameluk and Ottoman suits propagated with most of the Venetian artists who dealt with the historical-religious themes, and who represented narratives about the life of the Oriental saints during the first half of the XVIth century.

The commercial and political interest attributed to Islamic East (after the seizure of the Ottoman State in 1517 over countries of the Islamic East and Egypt) was extended to all the communities and religious schools which had spread out in Venice thanks to the financing of the Venetian merchants who controlled on the commercial and maritime roads of the Mediterranean Basin.

This period witnessed the spread of Islamic artistic Orientalism in the religious themes about the ideological stenches established by the trio of power in Venice: the merchants, the monastic communities, and the artists. The intensity of the ideological misrepresentation of the image of Oriental Muslim varied from a school to another, from a community to another, and from an artist to another. Nevertheless, the artists adopted the descriptive narrative expression which gathered the architecture (in its diverse periods), the human being, the nature, and the Islamic decorative arts as realistic witnesses) of the authenticity of the historic fact.

Therefore Carpaccio Orientalism is close to the Brothers Bellini School and to Mansueti. It is about one of the most eminent artists among those who represented the religious themes with an Oriental Islamic character , strengthening the foundations of Islamic artistic image in this artistic genre widespread during the Renaissance. Carpaccio rigged out this image in political and commercial tension taking on the Christian-Islamic religious conflict character. Besides, he started synthesizing the architectural elements

representing the successive civilizations in the East (Roman, Byzantine and Islamic) with suits, personalities, decorative arts, fabrics , embroidery and others. It is one of the most eminent Venetian artists who answered to the appeal of contemporary politics in religious works of art. Carpaccio indeed created a series of paintings telling the narrative of Oriental saints life: Georges, Stephen, Troad, and Jerome. These works were financed by the Brotherhood of the Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni established in 1451 by a group of diplomats. These latter supported their merchant brother working in the Venetian ships crossing the Mediterranean Sea. They also financed their wars against the Turks and their participation in the defense of the Cyprus island, what deserved the blessing of Pope Sixtus IV.

The position of this Brotherhood towards the Islamic East surpassed the defense of the commercial interests in the Mediterranean Basin and ports of Islamic East, in the financing of the wars which led the Venetian fleet against the Muslims. It is different in this respect from other Brotherhoods which defended their commercial interests and economic presence in the commercial navy dealing with the Islamic East.

This difference in position between the religious schools towards the Islamic East was reflected in the artists who painted religious and narrative subjects in an Islamic Orientalist style in the art of Venetian painting during the Renaissance.

This is what we observe in Orientalism of Carpaccio who painted the Meeting room of the Scuola di San Giorgio Schiavoni with a series of narrative religious paintings: nine mural frescoes among which two illustrate the life of Jesus Christ, three illustrate episodes of Saint Jerome's life, three illustrate the life of Saint Georges , and the last one illustrates Saint Troad's life (begun in 1502 and ended in 1507).

Three of these works thus illustrate episodes of Saint Georges's life: *Saint Georges and Dragon*; *Saint Georges Baptizing Moon dwellers*; *Saint George's triumph*. In these mural frescoes, Carpaccio painted the scene where the event takes place by setting it in an Islamic Oriental composite and selective context. He based the composition of the scenic frame of his Oriental religious subject on Oriental-Islamic data, it is about books appeared following the Crusades against the Islamic East or a little time after and which speak about Holy Lands and saints.

A few years later, between 1511 and 1520,Carpaccio buckled down to paint episodes of Saint Stephen's life with the same artistic enthusiasm with which he had previously painted scenes in the Oriental-Islamic context. It is about two mural paintings which decorate the Meeting room of the Scuola di San Stefano, one of the most ancient Brotherhoods of believers in Venice. One represents *The Stoning of Saint Stephen*, the second *Saint Stephen's preaching*. In *The Stoning*, Carpaccio substituted the Hebrew who stoned to death the Saint by the Muslims Ottoman Mameluks. Indeed, he dressed the

Jewish personalities, the protagonists of this dramatic historic event of Saint Stephen's Christian torture, in contemporary Ottoman Islamic suits, with fashionable Ottoman headgears also. That is how the Muslims were depicted as killers of Christian saints and occupiers of the land . Hence the Muslim bore the burden of the Jews and their relation with the Christian religion. As for the technical aspect, the artist pursued the same panoramic tradition in architecture constituting the general stage where the religious event takes place, except that this latter takes place in Jerusalem this time.

Carpaccio gathered the Roman, Byzantine and Islamic architecture, also by including the Christian and Islamic crowds instead of the Jewish and Christian crowds. He shifted the conflict which historically took place in the European religious consciousness between the Jewish and the Christian religion during the Middle Ages towards a conflict opposing the Christendom and Islam during the Renaissance. He confined the contemporary Islam with its Ottoman representatives who were able in at that time to establish a extended Islamic empire. He placed them in the compartment of the historic antagonism to the Christian religion, holding them responsible for the crucifixion, the murder, the stoning and the martyr of the holy Christians in the Holy Land and in Egypt. For the first time, we saw appearing in paintings of Carpaccio the image of the Dome of the Rock, Qubbat as-Sakhra, and the Mameluk minarets as symbols of the Islamic monuments in the Christian religious paintings (Saint Etienne's preaching).

By blending the Islamic architecture with the antique Roman and the contemporary Christian architecture in a wide panoply of architectural and ornamental details in suits, turbans and headgears ornamenting women heads, Carpaccio restricted himself to the Orientalist tradition of the Christian religious discourse financed by the Brotherhoods communities and the Venetian merchants. A tradition that started with the Bellini brothers in the episodes of Saint Mark's life, and that Carpaccio dedicated, crystallized and generalized in the episodes of the life of the majority of oriental saints whom he painted.

Nevertheless, the review of these religious paintings in the light of historical data and those of art history that begin to reveal important realities about the relation of Christian Europe to the Islamic world during the Renaissance, this review allows us today to notice the content and the form of Islamic art image in Orientalism of the Italian Renaissance and to put it in the context of the turbulent political events between the Ottoman State and the European countries.

Certain researchers suggested that the opposing visual discourse which was spread in the art of the Italian Renaissance was due to the anxiety in front of European political and military defeats faced by the Ottoman State. Indeed, several fortresses and Italian and Venetian military and commercial sites essentially fell in the hands of the Turkish Ottomans since 1499, up to the signature of the peace agreement between the Venetians

and the Ottomans in 1502 by the help of Pope Alexander VI.

We also note the political decline and the military defeats endured by Venice (chief of the maritime trade with Islamic East), Italy and some European States brought their artists and their ideologists intellectuals to make them revive the images of Oriental saints and to impute to the Muslims Mameluk and contemporary Ottomans the responsibility of their persecution and their murder. Very often, the military defeats are justified under the guise of religion with the aim of awakening the popular enthusiasm to lead ,later, other military wars between Europe and Islamic world. Indeed, they painted the triumph of the Christian Saints over the Muslims in the church frescoes, public edifices, Brotherhoods, labor unions and missionaries' communities after every military defeat undergone by the Venetian fleets in front of the Ottoman army, and before it, the Mameluk army. It is indeed the edifices which were visited by the crowds of Christian believers and by the majority of the Italian people; what brings inevitably to develop this hideous image of the Muslim murderer, violent and impious in the Christian popular consciousness of that time. Here is which brought after all, to stimulate the material and spiritual energies to colonize the countries of Islamic East and plunder its wealth during successive centuries, then contribute to the development of this image in the Western media. It is likely that we shall need a considerable number of studies and researches to clean this human and artistic image of the ideological impurities related to the Western economic and political interests in the Islamic East.

The reinterpretation of artistic Orientalism starting from the roots of the development of Islamic art image in Italian religious painting allows us today to objectively stop and at the same time correct the conceptual muddle of the image and the content. Indeed, the selective and fragmentary relationship separating the image from its content in the Islamic cultural and artistic personality carried at that time a muddle and structural conceptual errors in the art of Italian painting.

Besides, the "non-temporal" proposal of Islamic artistic image in Italian Christian religious themes created a negative and an opposing image in the European popular consciousness of the crowds who frequented churches as places of worship. At the time of Renaissance, the influence of Italian art on European art is important in the process of consecration of this image, and its development in European art, then American art successively.

The muddle and conceptual errors in the incorporation of "time" and "space" by considering them Oriental data of the Christian religious legend in Oriental origins interacted in the development of an "ambiguous" image of Christian personal faith in the ascetic and puritanical features. The appearances of Islamic Oriental " sultanic " luxury served as an allegory to depict the asceticism and the faith of the sacred Christian. Very

often, we notice this artificial, ambiguous image and missionary image re-emerging to chair East-West relationships throughout the successive European artistic periods.

(1) The Noble Dreams: Weekend Pleasures, *Orientalism in America 1870-1930*; Washington, 2000.

(2) Venice and the East 828-1979, Gallimard, the Arab World Institute; Paris, on 2006

(3) Op. Cit. *Venise and the East*

(4) Barry Michael: *Giorgione and the moors of Venise* (Venise and the East) pp. 146-173

(5) Further details in Dr. Zinat Bitar: Saint Francis of Assisi church, in (*Ghiwayat Assourah...*) Beirut, Arab Cultural Center, 1999; pp. 312-319

(6) Op. Cit. *Venise and the East* p. 75

(7) Roncalia: *M. St. Francis of Assis and the Middle East*; Cairo, 1956.

In 1220, on his return to Italy coming from East, Saint Francis of Assisi spread his religious mission of purification among Christians whom he considered careless about their religion. The Legend of Saint Francis of Assisi entered Italian literature and art as a symbol of faith during the 13th and 14th centuries. In the Divine Comedy, Dante personified the ordeal by fire realized by Francis of Assisi in front of the Sultan. The original version quotes:

"E poi che, per la sete del martiro,

ne la presenza del Soldan superba

predicò Cristo e li altri che 'l seguiro,

e per trovare a conversione acerba

troppo la gente e per non stare indarno,

redissi al frutto de l'italica erba,"

[English version:] « By thirst of martyr, in the presence of the magnificent Sultan he preached the Christ, him and the others who followed him , and as he found too hard the conversion of people, and not to pointlessly stop there, he went back to fructify the Italic grass. " Paradise, Song 11, Verse 150-155. See also notes and comments of Hassan Othmane, translator of The Comedy from Italian to Arabic about this historic event and on these Dante's verses in the Paradise. Dar al-Maarif, Egypt 1968, pp. 237, 238

(8) See: Zinat Bitar, *Al-Istichraq fil fann arroumansi alfirensi*, Alem al-Marifa, Kuwait, n. 157 chap. 1.

And also: Zinat Bitar: *Tahaoulat al-quiem walasalib warrouh*, in (*Ghiwayat Assourah...*) Op. Cit. pp. 219-234

(9) Op. Cit. *Venise and the East* p. 125-1. Setaioli were Venetian silk merchants who imported pure silk from Syria, Egypt and Iran, then re-exported it towards Muslim world in the form of silk thread , after the spinning.

(10) Gentile Bellini and his brother Giovanni were members in the service of Scuola which included several merchants and diplomats who had established business and diplomatic relations between Venice and the Mameluk Ottoman state. There was among the famous merchants Ambrogio Contarini and Giosafat Barbaro who wrote his travel stories in Iran and to Trabzon on the Black Sea.

(11) Raby Julian: "Exotica from Islam" in O. Impey and A. Mac Gregor ed, *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet Curiosities in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe*, Oxford, 1985, p. 251-258.

(12) Raby Julian: *Venice, Durer and the Oriental Mode*. The Hans Huth Memorial Studies, 1, Totowa, NJ, 1982, p. 41

(13) Catarina Schmidt Arcangeli: Orientalist painting in Venise from XVth to XVIth Century, in *Venise and the East* p. 121-139, p. 128

(14) Botti Isabella "*Between Venice and Alexandria: The teleris belliniani for the Great School of St. Mark*" in Venezia Cinquecento, 3, 1992, p. 333-373/

(15) Op. Cit. *Venise and the East*: p. 139. See Palluchini Rodolfo and Guido Perocco: "I Teleri del Carpaccio in San Giorgio degli Schiavoni", Milan, 1961, p. 72

(16) Gentili Augusto: *The story of Carpaccio, Venise, the Turks and the Hebrews*. Venise, 1996, p. 69-74

(17) Op. Cit. Palluccini and Perocco: Ibid. p. 72. *Venise and the East*, p. 131

(18) *L'Arte dei Setaioli e la Scuola di San Marco*

(19) *The Golden Legend of Voragine* (1269). Jacques de Voragine

(20) The illustrations of Reuwich: Erhard Reuwich (*Peregrinationes in Terram Sanctum*) Pilgrimage in the Holy land of Bernard Von Breydenbach, published in Mayenne in 1486. Venise and the East, p. 306-307

(21) Saint Georges was born in Cappadoce in Turkey, and played a leading role in the Byzantine Church. He is also the Patron saint of the city of Beirut and his rescuer of the dragon.

Saint Stephen lived in Jerusalem and was stoned to death by the Jews who accused him of heresy and alienation from the precepts of God and Moses. He was brought outside

of the bulwarks of the city where they obliged him to prostrate himself, to be then stoned to death up to the martyr. For more details, see Venice and the East p. 306-307. See also: Gentili, Op. Cit. P. 136-138

(22) Catarina Schmidt Arcangeli: *Oriental painting in Venise from Xvth to XVIIth centuries* p. 133 et 306-307. See also Gentili Augusto: *The story of Carpaccio, Venise, the Turks and the Hebrews*. Venise, 1996. p. 55-56 and 136-138.

(23) Patricia Fortini Brown: *Venetian Narrative Painting in the Age of Carpaccio*. New Haven and London, 1988, p. 296-298

Islamic arts between inspiration and plagiarism

- **Islamic architectural art between identity and subordination.**

  Prof. Dr. Afif al-Bahnassi

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Islamic architectural art between identity and subordination.

Prof. Afif al-Bahnassi

Introduction to the history of Islamic architecture

Before the recent separation of figurative arts from architectural art, Architecture was the receptacle of all decorative, calligraphic arts and figurative images. This established fact had begun in the architecture of mosques, *medersa* and palaces since the first Islamic era in all regions which adopted Islam in East as in West.

In this essay we are going to limit ourselves to the Islamic architecture in Arab countries. The first monuments to emerge are in Jerusalem *the Mosque of the Rock*, in Damascus as *The Mosque of Omeyyades*, and *the Mosque of Cordoba* which are still the first witnesses of the early appearances of Islamic architectural art in Arab countries. These edifices were inspired by architectural arts which preceded them. But as the architectural aesthetic features began to stand out more and more clearly, reflecting the Islamic thought, its arts and its traditions, then the characteristics of Islamic architectural art, the secrets of its aesthetic unity and the reasons presiding over the diversity of its styles, were clarified. We perceived this diversity through the plurality of visions and the diversity of cultural and social environments in a vast region which extended to cover three continents: Asia (Iraq, the countries of the East and the Arabian Peninsula), Africa (the countries of the Maghreb), and Europe (Andalusia and Sicily). The Islam and the Arab identity constituted two sides of the same coin: that of the national and cultural identity.

Significance of the architectural identity

During the research in the Islamic architectural identity and its comparison to other architectural systems, it is licit to wonder: does this identity manifest itself in the structure of the architecture as surface areas, space, features, curves, roofs, staircases and supports,

or through decorations which are tied to them on the outside and internal walls?

Talking about the architectural identity, the Egyptian architect Hassan Fathi considers it as simple as the rural architecture from the point of view of the masses, the spaces, and the perspective, and through the decorations, strengthened by the architecture itself.

We consider that architecture is a language that bears meanings and carries out human, social and cultural functions. It is a language done by spaces that represents the human being. In that respect, the history of architecture is the history of human civilization, of this Man who established this architecture and developed it according to his needs, ambitions, and tastes.

The relation with the Islamic thought

Since the dawn of Islam, the architecture was inspired by dominating systems in the countries where the religion was spread, in particular the systems of classic and Persian arts. But as Islamic culture and thought as well as social traditions began to take shape, Islamic architecture began in its turn to be distinguishable and to establish its autonomy. This trend was conspicuous in the development of the architectural system of the Mosque of Cordoba. At first, there is a part built on the order of Abdurrahman Al-Dakhel, inspired by the Al-Aqsa Mosque and by the Mosque of Omeyyades in Damascus; then the successive sections built on the order of Abdurrahman II, Hicham, and Al-Mansour. These sections defined the characteristics of an independent architecture and highlighted a stable architectural aesthetics which still constitutes the basis in the development of a spread architectural art in all times and in all the Arab countries.

Although the Islamic faith, based on the authentic sources of Sharia, was the backbone of the development of Islamic architecture, nevertheless there is a set of instructions provided by fekihs to define the rules of this architecture. In 376 AH, Ibn Arrami presented in his "al-I'lan fi Ahkam al-Bounyane" important organizational and sanitary rules. He broadened his essay to architectural rules and their effects. Ibn Koutaïba also spoke about housing conditions, whether it is about a tent or about a building. Al-Massoudi, also, précised the conditions of the geographical choice in a Bedouin environment to carry out the restoration of buildings in ruins.

The relation with society

Social systems in Arab countries diversified according to the variety of environmental and geographical conditions - coastal cities, of mountain or Saharan - or the diversity of customs and traditions, or still according to the value of the cultural heritage depicted by

the architectural heritage and the edifices dispersed over diverse regions. Regions are so divided: Iraq, the Gulf and Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Sudan, the Maghreb in North Africa, and European-Spanish region.

The diversified social systems the root cause of the variety of the architectural styles. It is probably erroneous to classify these styles according to government systems: Umayyad, Abbassid, Fatimid, Almohad etc. It is rather erroneous to define the styles according to their geographical locations. It is much more appropriate to define them according to social systems which inherited their cultural traditions, and thence architectural. It is about the nature of the social system which was established by the effect of the existing heritage, the history, traditions, dialects, the life style and the clothes. In general, the architecture remains a part of the social fabric and its intellectual environment. The Arabic society is distinguishable by its family and tribal belonging and by its tight spiritual connection to the Islamic, natural and human values.

The human scale

The Islamic architecture is based on the respect for the human being needs in the field of architecture; these needs amount in the housing, the safety, the rest, and the leisure. It would seem that these characteristics are common to all the architectures of the world; however a having glance at the Western architectural system, both ancient and modern, indicates that it is based on the respect for rules and for static architectural orders such as the Doric, the Ionic and the Corinthian in the classical arts, then Baroque and even the modern architectural systems.

Europe always complied with the mathematical architectural order which it statically imposed on all the forms and the functions of architecture, without having due attention to the human criteria. A great deal of attention was given to the outside shape, the architectural mass, and to the relation of this “externalist” architecture with arts of sculpture and painting in the definition of the architectural system. In contrast, the Islamic architecture has always been based on the human scale.

This system is revealed through focusing on the inside of the architectural construction where the main function of the housing and the life lies. Thus this architecture has an “internalist” character heedless of the outside aspect. It is an architecture which revolves around the open-air, called *fênê* (courtyard) or *hoosh*, or *sahn* in mosques. Edifices are developed in two floors around this section, in particular the *Iwan* which takes the shape of a rectangular hall or space divested of the fourth wall, overlooks the courtyard, and flanked by rooms with high ceiling raised by wooden and marble ornamental elements. The walls of the adjoining rooms situated in the ground floor are decorated with stony

rows alternating colors, and embellished by two-colored stone arcs set by varying decorations in the shape of polychromatic stars, made in earthenware overlaid in stony panels. The courtyard of the building is furnished with lemon trees, with Seville orange trees, jasmine and roses surrounding a large fountain.

The human dimension of this edifice is not restricted to these magnificent aesthetic elements of which the inhabitant enjoys, but the courtyard itself is “the lung” of the housing. It preserves the cleanness of the air, air-conditions the natural atmosphere and protects from external noises. The experiments showed that the outside air does not penetrate in the courtyard of the house, but grinds above preserving the stability of the air and its temperature. Besides, rooms are raised compared to the level of the courtyard, what prevents the cold air from penetrating there.

In rooms, raised *mastabas* play an important role in stopping the cold air circulating at the level of the low parquet of the room.

There is also a system of natural conditioning of the air, spread in the Islamic architecture and working thanks to the *malkaf*, a tower of air rising over the building and facilitating the penetration and the circulation of air towards most of the sections of the building, procuring in this way a natural air conditioning.

Unity and Diversity

The Islamic architecture is tied to the principles of the Muslim faith built around God’s uniqueness, and the cultural and ethical codes quoted in the sources of the Islamic Sharia encouraging the believer to work in a responsible way and to make use of the aesthetics and the decoration. These resources made the relation between beauty and perfection, and called to the multiplicity of points of view and value judgments: “No person earns any sin except against himself only, and no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another (The Quran, VI-164).” The religion made the human being carry a heavy responsibility, holding him responsible for his free acts.

These instructions appear in the architectural system unified by virtue of the human and social principles, and diversified due to the responsible freedom. All the expressions of the Islamic architecture in its diversity assert the architect’s freedom of creativity; and it is difficult to admit the idea claiming that diversity is none other than the expression of the miscellaneous instructions set by the governors and the successive states. The architectural creativity is specific to the architect himself; it expresses his vision and desire to be closer to people in order to satisfy their needs in housing and their aesthetic pleasures.

The function

At first the architect had to bind the creativity to the function of housing, by producing a program in the service of the diversity of this function: prayer, teaching, health, grave, trade, power. Realizing that each of these functions had its architectural characteristics, the architect worked on mastering, then developing, perfecting and diversifying them. This is the way the development of the functions and their diversification were accompanied by the development of architectural aesthetics, as it appeared in the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, the Palaces of Alhambra in Grenada and Medersa of Sultan Hassan in Cairo.

The factors of subordination

The globalization emerged in recent time as an impetuous trend based on the organization of exploitation of others. It is about a neo-colonial movement emerged in the world of economy by means of the unity of the world market, the free trade and the unity of the economy. There is no doubt that this trend initially emerged at first in America and Europe, and claiming to be an ethical trend trying to raise the living standard in weak countries, is none other than a set of traps.

The globalization became a global fate which imposes a deviation outside the national course because of the supremacy of the strength of the other, self-proclaiming the world. States subjugated to this other had to do their best to avoid these traps, in particular that of the deletion of the identity and the cultural specificity depicted by the language, humanities, arts, architecture and heritage.

It is necessary to recognize however that world organizations as UNESCO, or Islamic as ISESCO, or Arabic as ALECSO never stop launching new strategies to protect the cultural identity and the diversified human heritage. Arab countries are required to strengthen their adherence to the principles and in the legality of these organizations to protect themselves against the currents of the economic globalization and its traps.

All the cultural organizations asserted the necessity of protecting the national identity because it is the means to enrich the world culture. The globalization indeed differs from the globalization based on the principle that the world is not only the West as it is the case in the globalization. It is rather about the grouping of all the small and big states which constitute the human universe, and which feed and prosper with the prosperity of all the civilizations. It is impossible to limit the world civilization to the achievements of a single civilization, whatever is this monopoly dominating state.

However, the cultures of big states were infiltrated in smaller states, in particular the architectural culture. This phenomenon is due to the similarity of the new architectural functions, the preponderance of the modern techniques and the new building materials,

the ascendancy of the modern means of transportation in the urban planning, and the diversion of the architectural system of the service of the inhabitants towards the service of avenues and arteries reserved for these cumbersome engines.

The subordination of teaching architecture

The infiltration of this novelty that is the modern architecture was accompanied by a system of academic teaching. They studied the history of the architecture which has been implanted since the Antiquity to the Renaissance, the Baroque and the modern architecture. Then they went deeper in the researches in the field of the aesthetics of this architecture, considered as world architecture. This academic distraction was accompanied in its turn by a general and total failure in the teaching of the aesthetics of Islamic architecture, of its systems and history as well as an absence of in-depth studies of its big monuments. Although the interest in the Islamic architecture began for more than a century, we still draw on our knowledge about the aforementioned architecture of Creswell, Marçais and their contemporaries.

The understated ancient architectural heritage, the study of the preserved monuments to Cordoba, Kairouan, Cairo, Aleppo and Damascus, the thorough analysis of building techniques and the aesthetic and creative principles, brought a lack in the definition of modern architecture the principles. This architecture tries nevertheless to implant its principles to protect the cultural identity above-mentioned.

The worst misrepresentation of this cultural identity is shown through the interest in the teaching of hybrid architecture, the assertion of its world dimension , and the importance granted to it in our teaching programs. The ISESCO office in Rabat makes efforts aiming to correct this misrepresentation.

The assault of technologies

The Islamic architecture made use of natural building materials such as the clay, the stone, and the wood. These natural materials provided the necessary protection for the building thanks to their power of insulation. They also allocated important savings to the expenses because they were available in nature as common goods. But the biggest accomplishment obtained thanks to the use of these materials is undoubtedly the support for the economy. Today, we spend currencies to import iron and aluminum for building, and modern equipments allowing us to acclimatize to nature and to reduce the drawbacks of modern buildings which require elevators to reach the superior floors. The modern architecture has become dependent on modern technologies in the building of concrete towers which is no longer built on the supporting columns or on the wooden structures.

Hassan Fathi criticizes these techniques, and in particular the use of the cement instead of clay, because the cement is a conductive and non-insulating material. He recommends the use of clay by benefiting obviously from modern materials which help to improve this natural, cheap and available material.

The assault of the architectural modernism

The modernism appeared more than a century ago in the domains of thought, of art and architecture. An exhibition entitled "The Heritage of Modernism" was held in 1986 at the Arts Academy in London on the occasion of the celebration of the centenary of the French-Swiss architect Corbusier (1887-1965). They presented in the aforementioned exhibition the works specimens of three pioneers of modern architecture: Norman Foster, teacher of the use of modern techniques; Richard Rogers, partner of Renzo Piano in the design of the Pompidou Center in Paris; and James Stirling, the designer of the Museum State Gallery in Stuttgart in Germany. The visit of this exhibition helped us to know the modernist revolution carried out by the architecture in the field of identity, history and of heritage.

The modernism was the most conspicuous alternative in post-war architecture in Arab countries. But the Western architectural modernism reached such a degree of extremism in the big monuments that it eventually damaged the character of the city and of the human scale, resulting in the preponderance of avenues and means of transportation in the urban planning. The architectural modernism was criticized in the West, and the defenders of postmodern architecture multiplied, calling up to a return to the heritage, the roots, and the architectural diversity throughout the ages.

Liberation from the subordination: "a search in the history and in oneself"

The architecture has been based on the satisfaction of human being's needs from the most ancient times. These needs develop according to the development of civil services and the development of the concept of creativity of the mimicry in the invention and the creation, and of the innate in the modernism. This development appears then in the forms of architectural heritage through history. The first steps of the search in architectural heritage have begun since the campaigns of travelers' explorers and with the first activities of Orientalists, archaeologists and historians.

In spite of their pseudo-scientific aspect, the objectives of these attempts were in reality political, aiming at revealing the secrets of the East or to assert the ascendancy of the West on the East as Edward Said put it in his book "Orientalism". We cannot however deny that we began to know the monuments of architectural heritage through

these reference works.

We might then review these works with the aim of correcting these points of view which considered that the emergence of Islamic architecture was dependent on present architectural influences at the time of the advent of Islam. It would have made the first era of Islamic architecture history a transitional period which subsequently succeeded a period of the development of architectural identity in Abbasid edifices of Sāmarrā and Ar-Raqqah, Fatimid of Cairo, and Omayyad in Andalusia.

The awareness and the architectural Renaissance

The Westernization of the Arab-Islamic wall clearly appears with the preponderance of the hybrid architecture and its effects on the national identity. Timid criticisms appeared at the beginning, to be later developed with more clarity in the international, Arab and Islamic organizations. These entities encouraged the trends towards an architecture capable of setting limits to the invasion of hybrid architecture and of highlighting the features of an authentic architecture depicted in the prized and crowned works by these organizations, such as the Foundation of Agha Khan, the Organization of the Arabic Cities, and the Prizes of the International Committee for the Preservation of the Heritage of Islamic Civilization.

These prizes were based on rules which amount to present studies and projects revealing aesthetic creations inspired by the heritage of all times, while trying to adapt to new functions, civil needs and modern technical means. These rewards allowed important achievements in the definition of the future of Islamic architecture in Arab countries. They worked to preserve the architectural identity while allowing the peaceful coexistence with the architectural currents of the world, far from any cloning and any subordination. Several outstanding architects appeared thanks to these prizes, as Jamal Badran, Jaafar Ibrahim Touqan, Salah Lamei Mustapha, Refaat Jaderji, and Abdulbaqi Ibrahim.

The search for the benchmarks of architectural authenticity

The architectural heritage is still present in force and represents the first lesson of the discourse related to the architectural authenticity; it is still capable of facing the challenge of modernism, the cultural invasion and this architecture brought by modernity and new technologies.

But the most important lesson to draw from the discourse about authenticity is national identity which became the condition of cultural, artistic, and architectural Renaissance. The benchmarks of this national cultural identity were asserted in the global strategy which was tackled by tens of Arab thinkers under the aegis of the ALECSO.

Another important and useful lesson to clarify the benchmarks of the authenticity focused on the research in the field of the aesthetics of architecture, and in the foundation of an architectural aesthetic independent from the rules of the Western aesthetics.

We recognize that the theme of the authenticity is the most mattering subject that we tried to tackle with the aim of clarifying benchmarks. We carried out in-depth studies of in the history of Islamic architecture and its architectural and aesthetic foundations; we were based on the Islamic architectural thought and on the long-term participations in the operations of archaeological research and excavations extending over two decades (1970-1990). This is the way we acquired a more and more clarified vision, allowing defining the concept of Arabic aesthetics in art and architecture.

The Islamic uniqueness (*Al-wahdaniyya*, or the recognition of God's uniqueness) defined the aspects of the civilization in all its forms, and in particular in architecture with its functional and artistic features. This uniqueness is defined by the absolute ideal that is Allah, The Almighty. It is this ideal which defines the aesthetics of art and architecture, as it defines the authenticity practiced by all without distinction on the basis of social class or religious affiliation . The ideal explains the spiritual side in architectural art which appears in the principle of the inner courtyard mentioned above, this canal which sends back the inhabitant to himself so that he finds himself in the presence of the kingdom of heaven.

The authentic architecture achieved the cohesion between the believer and his ethical, aesthetic and human ideals. The material connection appears in the dependence of architecture on its function and its usefulness. The assimilation of the objective and the subjective in the Islamic architecture remains one of the main characteristics of architectural authenticity, to which is added the concern for the aesthetic coherence in the multiplicity of styles and schools.

It would be also necessary to pay attention to the fact that the balance between usefulness and creativity, subjectivity and objectivity, materialism and spirituality which appears in the authentic Islamic architecture constitutes one of the most important starting points of the postmodern world architecture. Does it mean that the Islamic architecture maintained valid values permanently for the future development and creativity?

The architectural art in the postmodern time

After modernism finished the catastrophic break with the history, the heritage and human being, violent critical ideas emerged. We share the critical point of view of our friend Refaat Jaderji when he declares that modernism gave birth to an unprecedented crisis, by reaching this tarnished architecture.

The conventional term of postmodernism of which spoke Jencks and his group might explain the incapacity to set a precise program for the future of architecture. And if modernism still persists and that it did not lose its very essence so far as says Habermas, then it remains the way which inevitably leads back to heritage, as Poulot thinks, and as Hassan Fathi implied it by asserting that modernism was behind the return of architecture to its initial bases. So, the engineer and the architect come together to establish the canon of authentic architecture; the first one uses sciences and technologies of his time, and the second resorts to his architectural traditions and heritage and to his human spontaneity.

In general, the postmodern architecture in the West is oriented to a return to basics with the freedom to select and juxtapose successive historic styles. It confirms the statement mentioned above of Poulot and accelerates the return to the authenticity about which we talk.

The development of teaching systems of Islamic architecture

The majority of the Arab world universities does not offer Arabic architecture courses, whether it is about its history, heritage or aesthetics. They are biased towards in-depth broadened study of the world architecture of all the architectural times. And when there was an awareness of the necessity of implanting the modern Arabic architecture, these universities did not react to correct the development of this architecture based on the academic or critical references, or generation of academicians capable of saving the architecture from the hybridism and the violent torrent of the globalization.

The academies of architecture should today institutionalize the teaching of Islamic architecture according to an extended degree course which includes the Islamic history and its periods , the history of Islamic civilization, and in particular architecture and its aesthetic benchmarks. It would however be necessary to teach the architecture as a science and as an art. An art with its own schools, teachers and disciples; and a science subjected to rules, theories and critical equations, and based on the Islamic thought, the methodical archaeological excavations and studies of the traditional and modern techniques.

The objective behind the teaching of the Islamic architecture remains the assertion of its importance, the definition of its characteristics, and the knowledge of its most important monuments. It would be necessary to make use of computer programs which allow more knowledge, testimonies and resources, and which prepare the cycles of researches and university theses in the ranks of the higher education.

(1) We studied the Islamic architecture in the following works: Al-imara al-arabiyya: wihda wa attanaoua wal al-haouiyya. National Council of the Arabic Culture, Rabat, Rome - Encyclopedia of the Islamic architectural heritage (2Vol.) Dar al-Sharq, Damascus 2002 - Khitab al-asala fi fen al-imara, Dar al-Sharq, Damascus 2004 - Al-fen al-islami, Dar Talas, Damascus 1986 - Al-madina al-arabiyya al-islamiyya. Al-hawliyyat al-athariyya, Vol. 26, Damascus

(2) Hassan Fathi: Architecture for the Poor. Chicago University, on 1973

(3) See Zarkachi: i'lam assajed bi ahkam al-masajed (Inform the Prostrated of the Laws relative to Mosques), Cairo, on 1962. P. 226

(4) The copy reviewed and validated by the original manuscript of Ibn Arrami is available for free on the Internet. The audit work was done by Ferid Ben Slimane with an introduction Of Abdelaziz Daoulatli. The author Mohammed bin Ibrahim Allakhmi, is a Tunisian of malékite rite known as Ibn Arrami (the end of XIIIth-beginning XIVth centuries). He was the master of the corporation of the builders of Tunis in the Hafsid period. [Translator's note]

(5) Ibn Koutaïba: Ouyoun al-atibba (The Eyes of doctors), volume 1. Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi

(6) Al-Massoudi: Mourouj adhahab wa maaden al-jaouhar (Golden rivers and Precious Minerals), volume 2. P. 48-65

(7) Peter Martin and Sherman: Fakh al-Aoulama (The trap of Globalization), Alam al-Maarifa magazine, Kuwait, 238

(8) Hassan Fathi: Al-Emara min ajl al-Fakr (Architecture for the Poor), Source cited

(9) Foster, Rodgers, Stirling: The Modern Tradition, New Structures (Royal Academy of Arts) London, December, in 1986

(10) HP. Jencks: the Postmodern Architecture, Paris, 1978

(11) Afif al-Bahnassi: Min al-hadatha ila my baada al-hadatha thread fen wal me mar (from the Modernism to the Postmodernism in the Art and the Architecture). Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Damascus, Cairo

(12) Edouard SaÏd: Orientalism; Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Beirut

(13) K.Creswell: Early Muslim Architecture; NY Hasker on 1073 p. 103

(14) Afif al-Bahnassi: Khitab al-assala fen wal ' emara (the Speech of Authenticity in Art and the Architecture). Dar al-Sharq, Damascus, 2004

(15) Dr Ezzet Assayed Ahmad: Afif al-Bahnassi wal jamaliya al-arabiya (Afif al-Bahnassi and the Arabic Aesthetics), Ministry of Culture, Damascus, 2008 HP. Jencks: Op. Cit.

(16) P. Poulot: heritage and Modernity; Paris, 1998

(17) Afif al-Bahnassi: Manhaj Tadris founoun al-Emara al-Islamiya (Program of teaching Arts of the Islamic Architecture); published by the ISESCO, Rabat, 2000, translated to French and to English.

The natural landscape in the manuscripts of Islamic artistic schools...

Inspiration and Creativity.

Prof. Ahmad Khalil

Introduction

From the XIIth to the XVIIIth Century, the natural landscape constituted an important element of Islamic manuscripts, contributing to the development of this theme in the Islamic painting. With very few exceptions, no miniature is free from the depiction of a natural landscape; whether it is simple with a tree or two or some plants covering the ground of the painting, or composed of several elements ; mountains, rocks, rivers, architectural forms and skies . We can say that the natural landscape is the base of painting in Islamic manuscripts.

The natural landscape in the Arabic school

Prior to the advent of Islam and contrary to other nations, the Arabs did not know painting as an art; so, the pre-Islamic period of Jahiliyyah did not have its pictorial works. It is likely that the distance taken by the Arabs during Jahiliyyah vis-à-vis the figurative representation influenced them later when the Islam appeared. But even those of them who clung to their polytheistic religions , Jewish or Christian did not know the figurative representation except for Syriac Jacobite images and other Oriental Christian religions. It proves that the Arabs were not keen on images. This social influence , which diverted the Arabs from developing painting, has extended since the dawn of Islam until they got in touch with other nations of diverse Arab civilizations, having different arts also such as the art of painting. That was when the Arabic painters were trained and learnt figurative arts from these diverse Christian, Byzantine, and Sassanid nations. But the teachings of God's Messenger were new in their spirits, since Islam insists on the fact that the relation between God and his servant should not be distracted by any preoccupation such as the painting or the image. The first mosques were free from any decoration or engraving, and from any demonstration of earthly joy; and even the painting were void of any representation or living beings' representation.

The birth of the Arabic school

The Arabic school, the first school of Islamic painting , has developed since the XIIth AD the art of colored miniatures to decorate the manuscripts. Then its art centers spread out as local subsidiaries in all the regions of the Islamic world. It is very likely that it had started in Baghdad where there had been several art centers of which the capital city of the Abbassid Caliphate himself, Mosul and Diarbakir, as well as Koufa and Basra. Then it spread out in Syria, Egypt and Iran, in particular during the Seljuq period when it went on for a long time side by side with the Mongolian school of the Islamic painting in Iran during homonymous period. The Arabic school also reached North Africa and Andalusia.

The characteristics of the landscape in the Arabic school

The human representation prevailed with strength and vitality in the school of Arabic painting (the school of Baghdad), without having due attention to the details of body parts, nor to their refinements or at least to the proportions between the members, and leaving aside feelings and sensations; human faces were reproduced void of expression, such as masks. This school did not improve the representation of nature as the Chinese or Western arts did ; the image had only two dimensions: the length and the width without any track of the third dimension , the depth. It should be noted however that the Arabic school knew a success in the depiction of animals, in particular parts of the Iraqi countryside as horses and dromedaries, excelling in their aesthetic and artistic study.

In the plant depiction, the Arabic school aims towards the decorative composition; what made it to go beyond the visual reality of plants. There are however plant depictions which mime the nature. As for the depiction of edifices , it adopted the style of the linear configuration and the idiomatic style; painters of this school did not lean towards the use of the bright and scarlet colors. When they wanted to depict water movements or knots of tree trunks, they used a semblance of forms in spirals. In this school the landscape is secondary, and artists did not work on the perspective because the painter supposed that the audience could see the whole landscape without one part hides the other. As for the impression of depth and the suggestion of the third dimension , the technique gradually penetrated the Islamic art of the XVth century with the appearance of Turkish school and relations with the West.

One of the main characteristics which distinguishes the Arabic school in the illustration of manuscripts is the transformation of nature. The plant depictions are very varied in this school, but it should be noted however, that the painter depended on a vision based on the understanding much more than on the significance of the view ; which lead to the transformation of nature. This transformation varies however in acuity ; certain

paintings keep imitating nature allowing us to distinguish the varieties of trees and fruits, while in the other cases, painting definitively go off realism.

The source of inspiration: styles of the Near East

The painter of the Arabic school derived his style of depicting a spread variety of plants in the Near East before Islam. This style is actually the result of the reaction and the synthesis of various artistic elements - as fish in the sea depicted in the form of waves, and the forms of boats depicted on the side filled with people ; techniques which were already known in Mesopotamia and in the Near East since the Babylonians and the Assyrians. These first characteristics of the natural landscape depiction started to appear in the manuscripts of the Arabic school with the manuscript of the veterinary book wrote by Ali Ben Hassan Ben Hebat Allah in Baghdad in 1309 AD. We find the typical characteristics of the premature period of the natural landscape depiction of the Arabic school there, and which is distinguished by a great simplicity. The images void of background, and the ground line is drawn in the form of a line made of leaves of trees from which stylized plant leaves are budding here and there. It depicts two knights riding their horses. This miniature has the characteristics of the Arabic school represented by the ground line and the stylized and simplified plants.

The landscape at the painter Al-Wassiti

Yahya Ben Mahmoud Ben Yahya Al-Wassiti is considered as one of the most famous early Arabic painters, as he represents an excellent example of the style of Islamic painting in Baghdad. This talented artist illustrated the literary scenes of the *Maqamat Al-Hariri* in 1237 AD. His illustrations constituted the most sincere expression and the the most extended study of the Muslim society in Baghdad with its diverse social classes. The miniatures which illustrate the manuscript are artistic testimonies which enlighten the development and the social evolution which the Islamic capital had known then during this era of prosperity. Al-Wassiti as its name indicates is a native of the city of Wassit situated between Basra and Koufa. The paintings of Al-Wassiti, in particular those of the natural landscapes are characterized by the maturity based on the historical sources that the artist inherited of arts of Near East civilizations. Indeed, his pictorial creations look like the features of the Assyrian sculptures, and in particular the reproductions of fish swimming between waves and forms of boats filled with passengers. Besides, there is a similarity between the pictorial composition of Al-Wassiti and the composition of the Assyrian relief sculptures.

In a miniature representing Abou-Zayd Asserouji and Al-Harth Ben Hammem in

a village and belonging to a manuscript of *Maqamat Al-Hariri* in 1237 AD, in which Al-Wassiti resorted to plants as trees and flowers in several paintings to solve the problem of the composition and fill the space by creating a balance of forms, sizes and colors with the other elements. Trees appear as huge marine plants, and flowers were stylized in the extreme. The background on the other hand was furnished with edifices marked by their realism and their expressiveness. The artist used there the linear style which is based on the representation of forms by means of features rather than to concentrate on the masses and the shades.

Al-Wassiti in this work used only few colors even if the pallete seems rich. He resorted to the golden ochre next to dark magenta, olive green, and to the lilac blue. When he uses the yellow for example in the middle of a dark surface, this tint seems more scarlet, while it seems to be faded and shading to grey when he surrounds it with white. In the same way, when he uses carmine, it changes to clear lilac if he surrounds it with white, and to red rather than orange if he surrounds it with blue.

By this style, Al-Wassiti anticipated the impressionistic painters of the XIXth century; he also used colors derived of blue to express desaturated shades and colors derived from red and yellow to express the saturated shades. He also adapted the images of trees and edifices to give them the function of borders for the represented subject. So he placed characters inside the arcs of edifices; as well as branches and ramifications of plants served as a frame inside which appear human beings and animals. In this way , Al-Wassiti resolved the spaces of the miniature so that they are in the service of the painted subject; and it is for all these reasons that Al-Wassiti is rightly considered the pioneer of the Arabic school of the illustration of Islamic manuscripts.

The natural landscape in the Iranian school

Several schools appeared in Iran in the field of the illustration of manuscripts: Mongolian, Muzaffarid, Jalayirid, Timurid and Safavid. These names refer to the origins of the governors who reigned in the Iranian region. The intellectual and political visions of these sovereigns were varied; they were reflected in the artistic style of the depiction of the natural landscape of each school.

First : the natural landscape in the Mongolian school Ilkhanid in Iran (1221-1336)

Gengis Khan (whose name means Sovereign of the Sovereigns) managed with his armies to invade Transoxiana and Eastern regions of Iran in the year 1221. After its death, Houlagou worked to strengthen the Mongolian presence in Iran, then went to Baghdad, the capital of the Islamic Caliphate; he conquered it and killed the Khalifa Al-Mostassem,

putting an end the Abbasid Caliphate in Iraq1258. Houlagou established the Ikhanid dynasty which reigned in Iraq until 1336. Afterward, Iran was divided into small states governed by families such as Muzaffar and Jalayir. So, the appearance of the Mongols and their control of Iran had a great effect on the characteristics and the peculiarities of the Islamic painting in Iran, because the Mongols were deprived of civilization and arts such as they were in Iran under the reign of Seljoukid. They were in front of a civilization which charmed them, and they embraced the Iranian religion and culture. The latter was a follower of the Arabic school in painting style of the natural landscape. The depiction of stylized plants in a simplified way had a big similarity with the Arabic school style, until the appearance of a different new style including the Mongolian and Chinese features. The Mongols embraced Islam only after a long period of their invasion of Iran and Iraq. They appealed for painters and artists of China until the Chinese influences had changed the general character of the painting to which the painters were familiar with in Iran.

The characteristics of the landscape in this school

The painter of the Mongolian school focused on the human and animal representation without caring too much about the other elements. The figurative representations were in large scale and the natural landscape become the background of the theme which the artist wished to paint. These images occupied the foreground such the scene of the theater. The artist executed the human and animal elements in a way that feet or legs touch the ground line, the foreground or the levels representing the ground. The style of execution of plants and trees was realistic at the same time in the general aspect and stylized in details; so the foliage of trees was stylized while branches appeared closer to reality. In a manuscript of the Mongolian school, the artist painted several levels of ground to express the depth in the painting ; He omitted the depiction of the sky having raised the ground line at the top of the painting and covered the top of the image by a big tree.

The way of representing the earth has changed in the Mongolian image; instead of being represented by a ground line consisting of leaves as in the Arabic school, this line was transformed into one of several lines representing diverse levels , in the Mongolian image. In their turn, these levels were limited in number then gradually multiplied, becoming less and less organized and more and more distant from one another. The sky or the horizon was painted in the Mongolian style as if they extend beyond the upper frame, without being bordered by a line or bound by an end. The painting of the Mongolian school does not have a horizon or a focus on the lines of the view . The sky is panelled with small ornaments in the shape of spirals depicting accumulated clouds by golden color. We note in the detail of the landscape of Mongolian school the softness of colors, while Islamic painters of the Mongolian school in Iran had preferred vivid colors at the beginning as

it appears in the use of contrasts and oppositions in the premature paintings . Having undergone the influence of the Chinese styles, they began to decrease the contrasts and the oppositions and the colors of their paintings which sometimes tend towards serenity and harmony. Clouds were Chinese-style depicted, that is with ornaments and in volutes. It seems that the shape of the snail in volute symbolized in Far East clouds and flashes of lightning. The Islamic painters were inspired by it increasing their fine curves, and by diverting the other forms. These forms gradually moved away from their Chinese origins to become simple sinuous lines.

By comparing the style of the Arabic school in the depiction of the natural landscape in the Mongolian style, we find that the latter has more weight, strength and fury because of the epic themes of depicting battles and wars; the line had a great importance in the transformation of the forms and the bodies , and it was accompanied with a certain shade; bodies were released from their weights and became flat colored surfaces. As for colors, they did not provide bodies with that kind of the usual transparency in the Arabic school; the color was used as an abstract means to express the outside aspects of bodies and natural forms. The Mongolian style is characterized by a lifelessness similar to what we see in the Mesopotamian art.

Second: the natural landscape in the Muzaffarid school in Iran from 1336 AD

The collapse of the Ilkhanid dynasty after the death (of Abu-Saïd Bahder Khan) of the last powerful khan of the dynasty in 1336 entailed the division of the country in small independent states. Among them, the dynasty of Muzaffarid established an independent state having Baghdad as a capital. Muzaffarids are the descendants of an Arabic family that came to Iran during the Islamic Conquest. The Muzaffarid kingdom included the territories of Persia, Kerman, Isfahan and Iraq. This dynasty adopted in the artists and the scientists, what encouraged the development of the art of painting and the decoration of colored manuscripts which portray the artistic styles prevailing during the Muzaffarid Era.

In its beginnings the Muzaffarid school was based on the artistic styles of the previous Mongolian school. This is the way sometimes, the Muzaffarid painting styles of the natural landscape were based on the use of the element of the architectural background. It is about depicting diverse monuments; civil edifices such as palaces and houses, or military edifices such as fortresses and towers. These architectural edifices were painted with a simple conventional style where they depicted the main entrance and the windows, and decorated with terraces at the top of the walls or inscriptions at the top of entrances. The Muzaffarid school Landscape also resorted to the plant backgrounds tending to an ornamental aspect. This is the way the flowerbed of the painting is covered

with grass tufts of grass and with stylized flowers, depicted in an organized and arranged way. Besides this flowerbed extends up to the horizon.

What distinguishes the natural landscapes of this school are the hills in curved shape that bound the horizon at the top of the painting , with their spongy aspect, and sometimes exceeding the frame of the painting. The Muzaffarid style resorted to the distribution of elements in a way that the back depicting the sky is of a secondary importance; what is more the background may completely disappear because of the extension of the foreground at the expense of the back, quite as the foreground extends to such a point that it covers the painting in its almost entirety . Elements were distributed in harmony but without taking into account the perspective. Painters resorted to the perspective of the view of the bird which reaches all the elements of the composition, which explains that the landscape lost its depth and that its depictions seem void of weight or mass. We notice the reduced size of human elements where immobility prevails . As for animals, they were depicted in a style close to reality and nature, and in particular the horses depictions which we see in the majority of the paintings of this school.

Third: the natural landscape in the Jalayrid school in Iran from 1336 to 1432 AD

The Mongolian Ilkhanid dynasty reached its end in 1336 AD, and Jalayirids plundered its goods, in particular Iraq and the West of Iran. Jalayrids established the most famous dynasty which governed in Iran during the period between the end of the Ilkhanid dynasty and the succession of Timurid dynasty. The Jalayrid kingdom then included Iraq, the West of Iran, Kurdistan, and Azerbaijan. This dynasty is known for its support for men of letters and poets, and its patronage of the arts , in particular in Tabriz and Baghdad. The reign of Jalayrids extended until 1433 AD.

One of the achievements of the miniaturists of Jalayrid period in the Iranian city Tabriz, was the emergence of the natural landscape painting art for the first time in this country in the middle of the fourteenth century AD, even if the depictions had not yet reached a high degree of perfection. Indeed, the nature no longer constitutes the painting background, but rather a subject in its own. In the Topkapi Museum, there is an exhibition of a series of depictions of natural landscapes. One of these natural landscape paintings depicts trees and mountains drawn in perspective and revealing a certain depth of the painting. Trees appearing in the center of the painting were painted in a style where the imaginative approach and the technique of stippling prevail . As for the rotating waterfall in the foreground, it was painted in a conventional way with the moss in decorated volute from the traditions of the Far East. On the other hand, the clouds were not painted in the volute style but with more realism, looking like some grained marble in length forming clouds .

One of the most important characteristics and the salient lines of the natural landscape of this school is the artists adoption of the view from the top; the architectural forms seem to be painted in perspective. Even if it is not about the perspective in the Western sense of the word, it however suggests the sensation of mass without suggesting the depth or the dimension. We perceive in a manuscript page an image of the prince Homay in front of the palace of princess Homayoun from the manuscript (*Khamsa khawajou Karmani)* executed by Mir Ali Tabrizi in 1396, and illustrated by Juneid Naccach Soltani. We notice that the forms are reduced to the top, broaden in the front until filling almost the totality of the surface of the painting, and lined at the top by the horizon. So we see the ground in its entirety as if the painter had used the perspective of the view of the bird. This way allowed to spread out the human and plant depictions distinct one from the other in the painting. So, the landscape no longer constitutes just a background, it became an essential element of the theme along with the figurative characters.

Besides we notice in this school the diversity of the plant compositions. The depiction of the landscape is based on a large and extended platform full of tufts, small meticulously organized and arranged flowers, trees with straight trunks and conical summits as cypress, and trees in bent trunks and ending by fine flowers in stylized decorations, in addition to rocks in the shape of sponges and streams. As for the architectural compositions of the Jalayrid school, they are constituted by fortresses or by palaces; they are generally depicted from the inside or through decorated ribbons with calligraphic inscriptions or in the plant and geometrical ornamentations which crown the edifices. Technically speaking , we notice a remarkable progress in the carefully made mixture of colors. The painter resorts to the golden color and to the brilliant scarlet colors which bring joy and cheerfulness to the painting ; among these colors there is in particular: the red, the green, the blue, the yellow, the brown, the purple, the orange, the gold, the black and the white.

Another well-known work is a miniature which is called " the hero Zel " and which decorates a page of a manuscript of *Shahnamah*, or the Book of Kings, Ferdowsi, and made around 772 AH / 1370 AD. The painting depicts the hero Zel hunting a bird in the presence of the ladies-in-waiting of princess Rothabah. The scene is painted in a realistic style which is distinct from other Iranian works. The miniature was painted on a tilted axis from the left to the right around the river separating on one side Zel and his company and from the other ladies-in-waiting group. The characters are in a luxuriant garden with its tilted trees and its shrubs with red and yellow flowers on a golden platform. The banks of the lake painted in blue are lined with rocks in the form of coral reefs. We notice in this miniature a revival of the old tradition inspired by the art of the Chinese painting in the water depiction. Indeed, streams are diversified: the river seems a torrent which takes everything; the movement of water is expressed by circular lines which overlap each other ; the foam of the waters is painted in white on the surface of the blue water . There

is a harmony between the movements of the living beings, and in particular the human beings, and the forms of the elements of the natural landscape through the sinuous lines. Trees and plants were painted with the diverse degrees of the green, and the flowers in red; colors are intensely strong to bring this sensation of joy and pleasure which suits the theme.

Fourthly: the natural landscape for the first Timurid Era (1400-1450) AD

The prince of Mongolian origin, Tamerlan, whose dynasty arises from Gengis Khan managed to realize what Muzaffarids and Jalayrids failed to achieve, that is to unite Iran around a central power under its aegis. The Muzaffarid and the Jalayrid states were quickly vanished, and this new imperial dynasty governed from 771 AH / 1370 AD to 912 AH / 1506 AD. Timurids were the last powerful dynasty coming from a tribal family to govern Iran. They found the balance between the struggle for the power in Iran, in the East of the Islamic world; the Timurid Sultans belonging to their court attracted to them the most famous men of letters, artists, and painters coming from all the Iranian cities which were prosperous art centers as Shiraz, Baghdad, Tabriz and others .Thus the Islamic art witnessed its apogee in Iran during the IXth century AH / XVth century AD. Schools of painting were developed in Samarkand, Bukhara, Herāt, Shiraz and Tabriz. One of the characteristics of the Timurid school is its creative drive and passion for the painting of the natural landscapes that the Muzaffarid and Jalayrid painter have already tamed and in which it was applied by incorporating them as principal elements of the constituent artistic elements of the image, as it is the case of mountains and slopes which take the shape of sponges, and landscapes filled with flowers, with floral bouquets, and with diverse trees as the cypress and the plane tree, and with landscapes of orchards and with gardens which show spring effects through sensational colors the intensity of which is not lightened by gradations. We also notice the persistence of the depiction of the architectural backgrounds in a conventional style as if it was about glass edifices allowing to see what takes place on the inside.

Edifices are marked by their decorative richness ; the painter also used plant, geometrical and calligraphic decorations. We notice, that the architectural backgrounds in the Jalayrid school, occupy the majority of the space in most of the depictions of the Timurid school, characterized by its coherence and harmony. Another main characteristic of the Timurid Era in its early stages is the persistence of the style of the natural landscape depiction as Iran witnessed it under Jalayrids in Baghdad and Tabriz. Proof of this is the incorporation in the Timurid style the same existing elements in the Jalayrid school as streams, landscapes looking like the background of stage sets, the soldiers hidden behind the rocky hills, the abrupt movements, and the dynamic use of the powerful curved lines expressing the movement. Except that rocks looking like coral reefs differ in these

paintings of those existing in the works of the Jalayrid school.

What also characterizes the natural landscape in the Timurid school is its isolated appearance without human or animal elements. In the manuscript of seven poets including twelve paintings , these latter represent all natural landscapes painted in a very stylized way as fabrics with motives and the carpets. The stylization has so much prevailed that the painter abandoned the imitation of the nature; and we find the same slopes in round edges and harmonized colors in all the images of the manuscript. We also notice the presence of the river element in most of the paintings ; it often seems gushing in a sinuous stream in the middle of a natural composition marked by harmony and symmetry.

But the absence of human or animal beings of these landscapes does not prevent the presence of spaces including inscriptions . This manuscript is to be considered as an important link in the chain of continuous development of the depiction of the Islamic natural landscape in Iran. The images appearing on this manuscript take on great importance because they all depict isolated natural landscapes void of human or animal representation; the painter did not thus execute these natural landscapes as scenes of human events, but as elements for themselves. They are images which suggest that the painter might have wanted to depict the beauty of the nature as he likes it, or the beauty of the Paradise which God has promised to the pious souls. It is not absolutely a question of a wild nature, but rather sophisticated and adorned with its attires.

By reviewing the images of this manuscript, we can define the style of this period; we find the constituent elements of the natural landscape in almost all the illustrations of the manuscript. In one of these illustrations depicting a natural landscape, we see three white geese with colored plumage in red and blue who swim in a lake in the dark blue water in the foreground of the image. Lake banks are set by white pebbles striped in red; the lake ends on one side in a sinuous stream which ends towards the left of the background of the image with an oval shaped lake, the edges of which are also covered with golden pebbles striped in brown. A brown frame , where ornamental plants grow, surrounds both lakes and stream; while around the stream and the lake there is a yellow space filled with conical slender cypress in the sharp summits. In the foreground of the image, the same trees are spread out to the edges of the stream and the lake with an elegant harmony, and the beautiful gradations of brown. In the yellow space, four trees are spread out with fine trunks in red : two in the middle blocking the stream with leaves and slightly bluish white fruits; and two on the side of the painting in brown foliage. Although these trees depict known species, they were painted in a decorative style in shape and composition. In the center of the painting , the artist chose two small spaces and colored the ground of one of them in strange purple tones, then drew on it a palm tree in golden palms , full of fruits and surrounded by golden shrubs in bloom. As for the

opposite space, he preferred the orange color, drawn a palm tree in the greenish golden palms and surrounded with two trees: a plane tree and a mixed decorative tree. The artist left a blue space in the background and on the sides, edging downwards ; so elements separating the headland of the yellow space in the center of the painting of both purple and orange-colored spaces are the same constituent elements of the previous images that the artist reused. He painted a lake in the center of the painting where three cypress are growing, a palm tree and a peach tree, then he directed the stream to the back in a sinuous line which divided the painting approximately into two tributaries: one runs towards the right following a light curve, and the other running towards the left, and ending both in one river cut by the frame of the painting . He painted a delta between both streams where he spread out trees and flowers by using the marbling, and he only left , in the horizon, a small space at the top of the painting in the form of two triangles. The pure golden yellow color prevails in the painting .

In another miniature, the painter resumed the same elements with a light variation producing another composition. He placed the small lake in the middle of the painting from which flowed a stream extending to the left then to the right then to the back until being mixed with the horizon placed at the top. In the center of the painting, he created a purple triangle in the round summit, and spread out plane trees there, cypress and palm trees. He so repeated the same elements of previous both miniatures with some variations. The illustrations of this manuscript can be considered as the Persian miniatures the closest to the style of the abstract imaginary mental image, and originating from perceptions.

In this advanced stage of the style of depiction of the natural landscape, we notice a pronounced decrease of the Chinese influence. The Chinese clouds disappeared, and the horizon placed at the top reminds us of the ancient Sassanid traditions; the Timurid painter substituted rocks in the form of sponges inspired by the Chinese traditions by high curved slopes and of round summits. As for the way of painting the water in one of these paintings , it preserved the Chinese style.

The Timurid Era is uniquely characterized by the illustrations of the manuscript of *Shahnamah* which was realized for Sultan Ibrahim in the city of Shiraz in 1435 AD. This manuscript is distinguished by its variations which include figurative versions of the natural landscape close to the Chinese character, and exclusively colored in gold and silver. It is probable that this style is derived in a direct or indirect way, from the decorations of the Chinese ceramic and fabrics.

In the city of Herāt in Iran, the expression of the heritage in the illustrations of the natural landscapes is shown in a miniature depicting a scene where the Iranian hero Rostem kills the white ogre. It is also about an image of the manuscript of *Shahnamah* of the poet Al-Ferdawsi where we see the landscape of a mountain with a cellar where

two conventions of the Timurid style were used in the depiction of the rocky slopes: the slopes whose summits look like sponges similar to coral reefs; and those looking like fragmented rocky layers . It is about a typical natural characteristic of Lorestan Mounts in Iran where the artist expressed a deep sense of the space and a fertile imagination in the conception of an imaginary land. The plane tree to which a person is attached has dimensions and a different scale from those of the world of the human beings; as for the multicolored trees and depicting knots at the top, they are in a perfect harmony with the inscription appearing at the top of the image.

In another miniature which constitutes a model of the style of depicting the architectural edifices, the painter chose a very high perspective to expose the inside fortress , simultaneously drawing the double wall and the towers which surround it. The artist decorated all the edifice with the best inventions of the genius of the Timurid premature era in the field of the brick-built decorations ornamented with the *Kufic* and *Thulth* script, and by resorting to the moved closer vertical lines to such a point that they would all meet in the flight point if they extended even more, providing therefore a coherence for the composition. The artist successed by following a median solution: he bent the horizontal lines - as well as ground lines suggesting the depth and the continuity towards the palace and the background of the painting, as lines going back up towards the left. The rectangular frame of this painting is of a great importance in the stability and the balance of the image. The most remarkable is the contrast between the peace and quiet and the dramatic movement, strengthened by the unusual use of the perspective in half-angle.

General characteristics of the landscape elements in the Timurid Era

The elements of the natural landscape depicted in the Islamic manuscripts have precise characteristics: almost all the depictions of landscapes contain spaces for the texts of which the surface and the location in the painting differ , which could be at the top or below; most of the natural landscapes exceed the frame of the painting by one of their elements as trees or rocks; the background is painted in golden color to indicate the sky. Besides , these lines which characterize the Timurid school, reveal that there are almost no conventional clouds as those painted by the Mongolian school. Moreover the facades of the architectural edifices are enhanced by plant and geometrical ornaments, and edifices used as background occupy a big space in the painting.

The natural landscape at the painter Tamarind Behzad on 1450-1500 AD

Kamaluddin Behzad was born about the half of the fifteenth century in the Iranian city of Herāt . Under the reign of Sultan-Husayn Mirza Bayqarah, the arts witnessed a

great revival in, Herāt capital of Timurids; indeed, the Sultan and his vizier the artist, the poet and the musician Mir Alisher Navoiy encouraged the artistic revival and honored the artists. It is in the shade of this patronage that the miniaturist Behzad worked in the Book Brotherhood until Safavids occupied the city. When Shah Ismaïl Safawi took the power in 1502 AD, he invited Behzad in his capital Tabriz where he expressed admiration and respect for him . After the death of Ismaïl, Behzad remains at the service of his son Shah Tahmasp 1524-1576 AD. It is said that Behzad taught him the art of the illustration.

In his illustration of the manuscript of the Orchard, the narrative poem of Sadi, we see the image of king Dar and his rider 893AH / 1488 AD. This miniature is considered as the expression of the apogee of the artistic Timurids styles due to the quality of the execution, the creativity in the proportions, and the good organization and distribution of colors. Besides, the illustration constitutes a very good example of the success of Behzad in the painting of the wild landscapes and the horses. The artist divided his painting into three horizontal spaces; he covered the lower space by a green meadow where horses graze: we see a brown horse and another white-collared one that drinks in a stream while a foal kneels down to suck its mother, a mare in speckled brown fur. The intermediate space was furnished by Behzad by almost naked rocky slopes in the form of coral reefs. As for the upper space, it was given a golden horizon furnished with plane trees which exceed the upper side of the painting . So despite the additions that Behzad brought, the respected traditions in the natural landscape preserved the fundamental vision of the artistic representational work full of imagination that the Persians invented. Behzad has however managed to strengthen the composition of the miniature, doubled his emotional involvement , and used colors based on a scientific knowledge.

Behzad preferred the blue and the green by placing them in spaces colored in a brown close to honey colors and yellowish ochre used to contrast them. He painted the sky in a conventional gold without adding it the Chinese traditional clouds. So, the landscape during this time was not a total innovation, but was rather in connection with the past; several elements are simple developments of the same ancient art. We also find some of his innovations here and there in miniatures of the beginning of the fifteenth century, and even earlier. One of the works of Behzad is indeed an illustrated miniature in Herāt at the end of the fifteenth century AD,where we perceive a development in the gradation of colors and in their distribution ; and we also notice a lesser use of red, and a dominance of brown gradations, the blue grey, purple, and soft green. We also see the use of black and white, and sometimes a dominance of blue gradations of the other combined colors. The representational compositions are of a very high quality; Behzad decreased the size of the characters and avoided the dimensions , the spaces between the diverse characters appearing so restful to the eyes.

The natural landscape in the Safavid school from 1501 AD

The establishment of the Safavid state dates back to Sheik Safyeddine's era . We consider that Shah Ismaïl Safawi is the founder of the Safavid dynasty after his victory on the Turkmen and his settlement in Tabriz ,declared capital 907AH / 1501 AD. Shah Ismaïl mainly buckled down to establish the bases for the stability of the Safavid state. It should be noted that Shah Tahmasp , the son of Shah Ismaïl , was a patron who supported the arts and the letters, and the artists and the men of letters; the arts of miniatures and book illustration prospered under his aegis, the production of illustrated miniatures increased, and it is in his court that shone the star of the most famous Iranian painters.

The natural landscape of the Safavid school is distinguished by important and fundamental artistic characteristics from the composition perspective, distributions of the artistic elements and colors, and the choice of the themes. We can assert , indeed, that the art of the Islamic painting in Iran reached its apogee under the Safavids. We observe in the illustrations of the landscapes of the Safavid school that the illustrator devoted a great care, what brought a harmony between the artistic elements of the painting where the realistic style prevails.

The illustrations of the Safavid school tend to record the scenes of the royal court, the hunting, the everyday life in the countryside, and the romantic landscapes. The drawings of the architectural edifices in the background are also distinguished by the precision and the application, reflecting the decorative spirit and the love of the beautiful. These miniatures are characterized by the depiction of precise natural landscapes which illustrate how far is the sentimental painter is fascinated by all the details of nature: trees, vegetation, flowers, rocks and stream flowing in a spiral movement . The sky is not free from images of clouds inspired by the Chinese traditions.

What most attracts attention in the natural landscape of Safavid style is the gilt surrounding the outlines and depicting images of birds during flight, frightened animals, flowery plants and wavy clouds. We also see the magnificent peacocks, the trees in the green foliage, and the golden spots scattered on the surface of the painting in a way that this color tends towards the green. On the ground, we observe the conventional decorative versions of herbs, while green shrubs with red flowers are scattered here and there. The elements of the landscape were reduced and the size of the characters is clearly smaller. The characters appear in the middle of natural landscapes where we see two kinds of rocks: round as the natural rocks, and conventional looking like coral reefs but braided in an innovative way and colored in small parts of different colors. Edifices are also of more reduced size and have become integral part of the landscape rather than being limited to a simple architectural background. The Safavid painter did not abide by the traditional square or rectangular frame , he sometimes draws it in the shape of a pentagon and joins

the square to the rectangle some other times, always by choosing a convenient corner of the frame that it crosses with elements which exceed the frame of the painting.

What characterizes the natural landscape of the Safavid school is also the persistence of the the depiction of Chinese clouds in spite of the decline of Chinese traditions in this school. Clouds appeared in the form of spirals looking like the marine shells. The sky also regained its blue color in some paintings while it was painted in golden color in the Timurid school.

The natural landscape at the painter Safavid Muhammadi

He is a Persian draftsman and illustrator who shone suddenly in the Safavid court during the period of artistic decline under the reign of Shah Abbas I 1587-1639 AD. The pictorial art witnessed a revival with the return to nature without being radically dissociated from traditions. Muhammadi presented a style which inspires the charm and the freshness ; and in spite of the presence of prevalent elements in the works of the previous generation. It is no longer about a background which withdraws in front of the main event nor a secondary aspect of a story told by the painting . All the elements are united to constitute the landscape. The lines of the drawing at Muhammadi are distinguished by an acuity and a brightness which exceed those of his contemporaries, but he gave free reign to his imagination stemming from his cheerful temperament, what was not spread in the Persian art before this date. We clearly see the Chinese influence on this artist whose name indicates that he embraced the Islam during his life of which we do not know much. We perceive the links between his paintings and the Chinese art; and it is possible that he was a Chinese who embraced the Islam or a foreign resident in an Asian East region. The illustrations of Muhammadi denote a funny spirit, and he liked to draw funny dancing characters, playing the music and hopping, enchanted by the cheerfulness and the joy. With very few exceptions, none of the Persian artists had tried before him to express the human emotions in his works. The paintings of Muhammadi are characterized by the little use of colors. As for his reproductions of natural landscapes, they are marked by the seal of the realism. He was also attributed drawings in Indian ink which emerged by the end of the sixteenth century, the fact of avoiding colors, being limited to drawing a small number of characters, and reproducing the natural landscapes of the countryside. Realistic style appears in the miniature of the “Drinkers”, because in spite of the prevalence of the natural landscape in all the scene which is populated by characters. We also see the pure Persian character in the composition with the appearance of the cat and the flowers drawn carefully. The background is always drawn in a single color; and we saw appearing in the works of Muhammadi scenes reproducing the everyday life and the personal portraits of the common people between natural landscapes drawn in the traditional style.

The natural landscape at the painter Safavid Ridha Abbassi

The painter Ridha Abbassi shone during period extending from 1610 to 1640 AD in Ispahan. His style is marked by the continuity of the lines which expand or diminish and then break in stop points, and by coloring the majority of them with pigments in the metallic glints which faded as time went by. We know that this painter attributed importance to the choice of his themes. He devoted a great care to the details of his works bringing them an abstract beauty. As it is reflected in the creation of the golden background where the utensils of the drinkers, the fruits, the branches of plants, and heap of clouds are put together creating in the end an absolutely magnificent global composition. Ridha Abbassi is classified the second after Behzad according to their importance; in fact it is not about his name, but about an honorary title which he was granted by Shah Abbassi as sign of consideration. It was a custom that the poets of the court, the calligraphers, and the artists have the name of the patron benefactor. Or, the carrier of this name was a descendant of Al-Abbass son of Imam Ali Ibn Abi-Taleb, cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet. His impact on his contemporaries is confirmed in the establishment of his own school , and in the invention of a new style of depicting the characters; which caused many imitators and followers to emerge. Ridha Abbassi looked assiduously to impose his hallmark , this is what explains that he signed all his paintings , adding some information about the date and the conditions in which the work was created. He is considered one of the banner-carrying figures of the second Safavid school. He in fact has the virtue of creating a new pictorial style in Iran completely different from past traditions of this art . He freed himself from the hindrances of the color and the ornament, as he freed himself from the obligation to fill the space and the multitude of elements and the characters in the landscape, who characterized the Iranian painting. He so created a style where a new character prevails consisting in highlighting the space and the theme in a soft and simple atmosphere. Metropolitan Museum in New York holds a manuscript of *the Shahnamah* in between 1013-1016 AH / 1605-1608 AD containing eighty-five illustrations marked by the characteristics of Ridha Abbassi's style . It is to this artist that we largely owe the fact of having changed the character of the Iranian illustration from royal to popular. The artist no longer exclusively draws for the Sultan, but he started working following his imagination and his art. This is the way he began drawing landscapes inspired by nature rather than the traditional themes painted from memory . Among the obvious characteristics of his style, is his lack of interest in the architectural edifices. He did not pay them any more attention in his works while they were very important for other draftsmen who placed edifices in almost all their works. He also removed decorations in the landscape through the use of the pencil which allowed him to quickly produce cheap drawings.

The draftsmen previous to Ridha Abbassi relied on the cheerful colors to create the

contrasts and the decorative atmosphere, and to give to the image an ornamental character. As for Ridha Abbassi he counted on his lines and his touches to create this rhythm. On the ground of his natural landscapes he drew branches with a simple foliage of varied forms. These branches constitute the hallmark of his drawings. He also drew the horizon, the dunes, and the landscapes which characterize the nature in Iran. But in fact, even in his drawings, we do not perceive the depth of the field or the third dimension ; even though some of his drawings where the shades appear suggesting a kind of materialization.

Miniature of The Conference of the Birds

One of the most important landscapes of the Safavid Era appears in a miniature called " The Conference of the Birds " in 1609 AD. At first glance, it would seem to belong to the drawings of the Timurid school but its elements reveal its late dating. Indeed, on the right of the miniature and behind the rocky slopes range, we see a man who holds a rifle made in the sixteenth century. And quite as the branches of the tree on the left of the painting , the rifle also exceeds the frame of the miniature. This miniature reveals a surprising skill; indeed, the softness of colors, the magnificent composition, and the lightness of the brush, everything indicates the pictorial traditions coming from the first stage of the Timurid painting In Central Asia and in Her**ā**t. The geometrical ornaments, the composition of rocks, and the way of reproducing the stream remind us of the Timurids works of the end of the fifteenth century. However the painting signed Habib Allah, one of the draftsmen working in the studio of Shah Abbassi. It is likely that the artists of Abbassi were strongly influenced by Timurids miniatures. We see finally in this miniature a tendency towards realism.

The natural landscape in the Indo-Mongolian school

The dynasty of Indo-Mughal is a dynasty of emperors who governed India from 1526 to 1858 AD; it was established by Baber, which means the lion in Turkish. He conquered India from the side of Afghanistan, then established the Indo-Mughla Empire; after his conquest of the northern regions, he spread the civilization of the Islam there. He was followed by Hamayon Ibn Baber 1530-1542 AD who spent a period in exile in Iran after having lost his throne in India. He visited Tabriz and was impressed by the pictorial traditions in the court of Shah Tahmasp; during his return from exile, he invited to his court several Persian miniaturists headed by the two masters Mir Sayed Ali and Khwaja Abdus Samad to whom he entrusted the supervision of the illustration of the manuscript *Hamzanamah* in 1560-1574 AD. It is about the epic narrative of Hazma, the uncle of the Prophet, whom some consider as the artistic symbol recounting the Islamic conquest of India. It is said that hundred draftsmen - Indian and Persian - worked on it

producing a unique work in the history of the illustration of miniatures and including 2400 illustrations executed on a cotton fabric of big and unusual size. The work was finished under the reign of Emperor Akbar the real name of which is Jalaluddin Ibn Hamayon. He was a patron, an art lover who tried to merge the Indian people with the Muslim Mongols Shiites by becoming allied with Rajput in a political and social group. This is the way the art of the Mongolian miniature shone with its characteristic features , because hundred of Indian and Muslim draftsmen were taught this art by the Persian masters. This is when appeared a new Indian art of which the general artistic composition, the forms, and the buildings were Persian in some parts and Rajput in others. We also gradually perceived the influence of the European art, in particular on the rules of the perspective and the presence of natural landscapes in the background. Working for the accomplishment of his main objective, consisting in creating a united nation, Akbar incorporated themes coming Hindus traditions and legends. Indeed we see several illustrations expressing Sanskrit texts being close to the illustrations of *Hamzanamah* and *Babernamah* which record the achievements of the founder of the Mongolian state in India. The illustration of the natural landscapes developed under the reign of Akbar; we notice more freedom in the use of spaces, quite as edifices are depicted in an almost three-dimensional style instead of the flat drawings. We also see that the living creatures as the trees, are personified in a way which suggests their magnitude in the space allocated to them in the miniature, and finally that the size of the characters and the edifices is reduced to the foreground.

The work of art of the Mongolian school can be considered as the product of the collective effort of a united team with fields of specialty . Some prepare the general artistic composition and the conception , others draw the characters, the subtleties and the details, and the others add the appropriate colors. These Muslim kings were thus the patrons of a new artistic school in painting where the Indian artists joined the artists arriving from Persia and from Central Asia to record the feats of their kings, their military epics, their parties and their hobbies.Even if it is rather the epic side which prevailed in their images especially in the early stages.The illustration of the Indo-Mughal miniature thus inherited in its debuts of Iran .Even if it eventually adopted ,before the end of the sixteenth century, a technique from the Indian popular painting and the European painting, as the perspective and the chiaroscuro . This is the way we attended to this transformation where Persian lines and colors mixed with the European realism and local Indian techniques. In the middle of the seventeenth century, the Mongolian painting was asserted as an autonomous art in itself.

The emperor Akbar's son , Jahangir succeeded his father in 1605-1627 AD. He was also a defender and a patron of the arts, but he was not concerned as much as his father in the illustrations of manuscripts, rather tending to the personal portraits, the events which took place during his reign, and the realistic studies of plants and animals. His period was

marked by an obvious change of the gradations of color in the illustrated miniatures, as well as by an expansion of the use of the shade technique and the light.

It turned out that some of the Indian painters were Hindus who inherited ancestral artistic traditions in the form of Buddhist sculptures in the caves of Ajanta and elsewhere. We thus notice that the local Indian traditions persisted side by side with the Iranian traditions. The Indian paintings are characterized by their colors, but palaces and houses are also distinguished by very fine plants and geometrical ornaments. It should be noted that the sense of perspective was respected in the depictions of the architectural edifices of the Indo-Mughal school contrary to drawings. Besides, the natural landscape of the Indian school is characterized by the presence of two influential: at first the Safavid Iranian influence, and we notice in this respect that the drawings of the natural landscapes are influenced , in their general conception and their artistic composition, by the Iranian artistic styles about the way of painting intermingled rocks as they are executed according to the Safavid style; the horizon is also placed at the top of the painting.

The second influence is European that the Indians knew by means of the Christian missionaries. The European paintings so had a big influence on the Indo-Mughal painting, in particular in the representation, the care given to the rules of the perspective, the depiction of wild landscapes, and the use of soft colors. It is this mixture between the old Indian methods and the methods inspired by the European paintings that clearly highlights the differences between the works of the Persian school and those of the Indian school.

The natural landscape in the paintings of the Ottoman Turkish school

In 699AH / 1300 AD, Osman Ibn Ertegrul Ibn Soliman Shah established the Ottoman state, and chooses a city in the center of the Anatolia in the West of Konya as capital. His son Orhan succeeded him 724-761AH / 1326-1332 AD, who implemented several reforms and regulations. Afterward, Murad Ibn Orhan 761-791AH / 1362-1389 AD took up the city of Adana as the capital of the Ottoman state. It is Sultan Mehmet II son of Murad II 848-886AH / 1451-1481 AD who was the most famous of the Ottoman sultans; he was named Al-Fateh after his conquest of Constantinople 857AH / 1453 AD. Mehmet Al-Fateh personality included all the intellectual and cultural aspects of his time . His court in Istanbul attracted a myriad of scholars, men of letters, and artists and so his court became the meeting place of the newcomers of the East and of the West, in particular the painters, as it was the case of the Italian painter Gentile Bellini who visited Istanbul and worked under the aegis of Sultan Mehmet Al-Fateh. The latter also sent Turkish painters in Italy to learn the art of the Western painting , as the Turkish painter Senan Bek Naccach. The achievements of the Ottoman sultans then followed one another; Selim I

son of Bayazid II conquered El-Cham Bilad, Egypt and Saudi Arabia and annexed them to the Ottoman empire. The State reached the height of its power and its prosperity under Soliman son's reign of Selim I; and it was at the time of Soliman The Magnificent, that the art of the Ottoman painting knew its golden age. The last one of the Ottoman sultans was Abdulhamid II who preserved a reign extending from 699-1342H to 1300-1924 AD.

The school of Ottoman Turkish painting of the sixteenth century was largely influenced by the Persian school. We notice on the Ottoman paintings the presence of all the elements known in the Persian art in the field of the depiction of the nature. There is however a fundamental difference between both schools; the themes of the Turkish painting, although inspired by the Persian paintings, are of a different style, and were brought multiple changes. Colors, although remained bright, are saturated by a striking contrast; the Turkish painter did not copy the colors of the Persian painter, but invented his own colors, tending rather to the simple scarlet colors which are conspicuous , even when they are mixed with other colors. On the contrary, the Persian artist preferred the compound colors. And even if the illustrations , which decorated the Turkish and Persian poetic works complied with the Iranian traditions, the remaining constituent elements of Persian influence were different , with few exceptions, and in particular in the illustrations of the natural landscapes.

The architectural backgrounds of the illustrations of the Ottoman school reflected the styles and the models of the spread Ottoman architecture under their reign in mosques, palaces, and fortifications. But we nonetheless note aspects denoting the European influence as regards the respect for the rules of perspective ; edifices are so drawn in rows generally slipping back to the bottom. The painters of the Ottoman period drew the natural landscapes as backgrounds of paintings because of the passion of the Turkish draftsman for the depiction of gardens and parks. The latter even symbolizes the countryside by a drawing depicting a park or a garden. In general, we notice that in most of these illustrations, the natural landscapes occupied a median position between the Iranian traditions and the Turkish realism influenced by the West. This is the way the new style of the Turkish natural landscape did not appear in the form of a copy or a genuine imitation of the Persian or European drawing, while remaining attached to the Persian style in the shared general principles between them .Miniatures are exempt from the aerial perspective as clouds and mists of any kinds ; the disappearance of the illumination and the absence of the representation; the brightness of the drawing and its continuity; and the absence of the third dimension in such a way as the landscape seems flat and shallow, that it is about natural landscapes or about characters, with a light influence denoting the European traditions in the art of painting.

In conclusion, the Islamic art is rooted in the beauty and pursues it in anything

and in all the meanings of this existence; but it is about the beauty in the broad sense which does not stop in the senses and is not limited to the definite models. The beauty of the nature, the beauty of the universe, the beauty of the values, and the beauty of the feelings are aspects of the beauty which the Islamic art honors, by making an original subject for the expression. It even presents the whole life through the aesthetic criteria. It is due to the fact that the Muslim painter contemplated the elements of the nature and thought about it profoundly, practicing The Almighty God's words: Then do they not look at the camels - how they are created, And at the sky - how it is raised, And at the mountains - how they are erected And at the earth - how it is spread out? (The Quran; 88-17,20) And this other verse: Have they not looked at the heaven above them - how We structured it and adorned it and [how] it has no rifts? (The Quran; 50-6). It was the starting point of the researcher in his search between hundreds of images illustrating the Islamic manuscripts, with the aim of extracting the meanings from it and the ideas, and with the aim of including the art of poetry as a fertile subject for the expression.

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Absent and present

Aesthetics between " Ibn Arabi" and "Heidegger"

Prof Sherbel Dagher

The objective of the research

Put in the second part of the Conference, this research studies the relation between "the inspiration" of local arts and "the plagiarism" of the arts of "The other". Thus the issue is the following : How art in the Arab countries can deal with the old Islamic artistic heritage in the light of the changes of the artistic scene in the current societies, in the globalized world ?

As the issue is widespread and subdivided, I will justapproach theaestheticpart of it.The reasons behind this thesis lie in the search of the study, the choices and preferences that every choice and aesthetic preference in artcontain .In fact, any discourse on "the inspiration" and "plagiarism" indicates a predestined path.Moreover,approachingthe issuejust from this point of view suggests that it is a technicalmatter whose objective is defined and goalis clearly set up ;whereas the analysis of the aestheticpart would allow a broader and major approach of the problem itself.It would allow a wider debate on the interest of the community to look into art, its causes, its alibis, its permits and its prohibitions (In terms of values, morals, taste…).This is what I thus examine through two texts:

"The Book of the Majestic and the Beautiful", *Kitab Al-Jalal wal-jamal* of Mohieddine Ibn Arabi;

"The Origin of the Work of art" of Martin Heidegger.

The intended purpose of the face-to-face is to first stop the foundation for the construction of a particular aesthetic discourse, then, in a second time, what could be these bases in our current artistic needs, knowing it is only a research and a proposal.

The aesthetic approach is very often missed from our writings and our discussions

about the artistic questions, as if we could exempt it , as if we could approach the subject later on without harming the artistic practice in itself or choices and proposals relating to the tastes and the values required by the artist, the researcher in Art . There are several reasons for this ,including:

- The weakness of philosophical research in our universities, since several universities have abolished the section of "philosophy" or never opened it;thus the aesthetic concern is almost absent;

- It is probably most commonly used to translate *Jalal*by majesty, where from the translation of God's name *Dhul Jalal wal-Ikram* by: Majestic, the Generous and magnanimous. However, I think it is useful to distinguish between the Majestic and August. Since *Saheb al-Jalalah* is disseminated to name kings and queens, meaning: His Majesty, and *Jalalah* is a feminine noun, while Jalal is masculine, I opted for The August extension of the Master of August, distinguishing the divine name in Arabic masculine form of the female royal attribute *Jalal / Jalalah.*

- The assumption of responsibility by some art or archeology institutes of the aesthetic education in limited and necessarily pasteurized manner, which transforms the lesson into a set of tedious and repetitive summaries;

- The Arabic aesthetic discourse is a victim of one of the following two problems:referring to the Western aesthetic discourse, explaining it and spreading it as a "master discourse" and the unique in the field ;or referring to recoveries of some old text comments without an effective distinction between the divine, the moral, and the aesthetics in terms of old aesthetics, whether Islamic or other.

My attempt in this research is limited;I try to show that to abstain from treating the aesthetic part in the artistic issue or deferring it, in no way means that art is outside the aesthetic research in itself.This rather means that it is situated in an intrinsic or not studied image.Therefore this research aims - if it succeeds - to justify the need for cognitive and artistic aesthetic training, today as in the past.

IbnArabi: Determining The beautiful and the Majestic[1]

To begin this research with the study of the first text referred to, that is "the Book of the Majestic and of the Beautiful" *Kitab Al-Jalal wal-jamal* (1) of Ibn Arabi, would need to be justified, permitted or explained at least.In fact, what Ibn Arabi wrote in this work and in others is included in the research of "the true and the truth "*Al-haq wal-haqiqah*, in his words, i.e., the religious issue ;how then can I justify my attempt?

Ibn Arabi said in the work cited:" You have to Know that the Koran contains the Majestic beauty and the beautiful" (Op.Cit. p. 45-46).Thispreliminary and clearly means,

that research in aesthetics implies research in the Book of God.But what draws attention in this delimitation it is that Ibn Arabi - contrary to former philosophers, scholastics, and *fekihs* –sets up a new correlation between the two terms:the August and the beautiful.And even if the first term is one of the Most Beautiful Names of God, *Asma' Allah Al-Husna* [2]:the Lord of Majesty and Honor (Dhul-*Jalal Wal Ikram*), the researcher struggles to find apart from what Ibn Arabi says, sufficient evidence which confirm it.Ibn Arabi knows thathis attempt is new, and he explains it at the beginning of the book:"I would like, God willing, to explain these two truths as much as expressionscan with God's help."(Op.Cit. p. 42) But then how?"I thus initially say that the Majestic is to God,a is a meaning that is His, HE prevented us from knowing what is the Majestic.The beautiful is a meaning that HE communicates to us, HE gave us knowledge that we have some of it , the handing-over, the sights, and the states;there are two topics on this subject:Honor and grace.This is becauseThe Beautiful has anelevation and a rapprochement.Elevation is what we call the Majesticand the Beautiful, the experts are talking about it, this is what is revealed to them when they think that they are speaking about the original Magistic we mentioned.It is the Majestic andthe Beautiful in relation to the rest of us with the gracious and the beautiful which is the reconciliation, besides the Honor.When the Majestic and the Beautifulare revealed to us , it is gracious to us;and without that we would be lost."(Op.Cit. p. 42).

Attention should be paid,at the beginning, to the fact that Ibn Arabi does not explain the nature of the possible relations, or on which his writings could be based, between "Majesty" Al-*Jalal* and "the revelation" *attajalli*, especially that he uses the term "Majesty" to indicate the greatness of God and His power , and the term "revelation" (reveals His self to them) to mean the condescension of God by giving knowledge to His creatures.Is it necessary that God reveals himself in His Majestic dimension?

It is on this basis that Ibn Arabi built his religious thought: God is capable of everything, and what humans get is what He allows them by His very capacity. This is what also explains the need to build a relationship between the "Majestic" and "beautiful," since Ibn Arabi does not attempt to teach or expose an "attribute" of the divine attributes ,i.e. "The Beautiful" or the meaning of "Beauty," but he wants to clarify "knowledge" as possible to humans, especially to experts . This places Ibn Arabi in two areas if we are allowed ,comparison and definition:

- God is Majestic, Majesty is His and it refuses humans.A majesty which makes His glory and honor « Izzatouhou 'anna » in Ibn Arabi terms ;

- The field of human, resulting from the first, "coming from Him towards us", and who is the field of the beauty and the exposure of truth to our intention "*Moubassatat Al-haq lana*" according to the expression of Ibn Arabi.

We should note that the second field - which is the matter of study for Ibn

Arabi and us after him - is in two actualities, or rather in two relations:the relationof the “transcendence” to us, which is “The Majestic and The beautiful”, i.e. what God reveals us and this is through how is he “revealed” to the experts;and the relation of the “proximity” which we

2- The 99 Names of God in Islam, said Asma Allah al-Husna.

find near Him, which is His honor (so that the expert does not fall into the “bad manner” according to Ibn Arabi), and the intimacy which results from it (so that the expert keeps his spirits “at the time of the vision”, that he recognizes what he sees and that he would not be stunned according to Ibn Arabi).The inherent opposition between the Majestic and The beautiful requires another opposition between the transcendence and the proximity, which allows an image that we can see from two sides:

- God’s look towards humans, as the look of honor and power, and what defines and enables it is the “vision” in well defined areas;

- Humans look to God, as the look of “nobility” permitted in its proximity and the resulting intimacy for the experts.

I studied in my book “The doctrines of the Beautiful” Mathaheb Al-Hosn (2), this relation between the superior and the inferior, indicating that the Greek thought has notified and even recognized, since Empedocles at least the existence of a “principle” or of a “ main cause ” : known and confirmed by the three monotheist religions. But I have also come up in the work cited to a more precise definition of this issue: the Islamic explanation of the monotheism went further than the others, since the principle “ of remoteness ” founded by the previous speech between the superior and the inferior is not recognized by the Islamic speech. It even dissociated itself in several of its principal currents and doctrines. But this does not prevent that there exist clear divergences in the old Islamic writings between “ the transcendence ”, “ attribution ”, and “ the resemblance ”.

I stopped in my book “The doctrines of the Beautiful” Mathaheb al-Hosn (2), this relationship between the upper and lower, indicating that Greek thought and even recognized since Empedocles at least the existence of a “principle” or “first cause” known and confirmed by the three monotheistic religions. But I also managed in the work cited in a more precise definition of this issue: the Islamic explanation of monotheism went further than the others, since the principle of “separation” established by the previous discourse between the superior and the inferior is not recognized by the Islamic discourse. It is even dissociated in several of its main trends and doctrines. But this does not mean that there are clear differences in the ancient Islamic writings between “transcendence”, “allocation” and “resemblance.”

Al-Ash'ari says about Mutazilites: "God is One, unparalleled, and it is not no body, no spectrum, no mass, no picture, not flesh and blood, gasoline or symptom (...); He is defined by any of the definitions of creatures that reflect their character incident (...) He has always been First, Previous, and Anticipator, Existing before creatures, and He has always been and is still omniscient, Capable, and Alive. "[3] Al-Kindi in his turn said:" The Unique and the Fair, therefore, He is not plasma nor image nor quantity nor quality, nor addition, he is not defined by anything that belongs to human beings, and he is not defined by a gender, or a person, or the intimate, or general or mobility as he is defined by anything that denies to be one in its truth: He is only a pure unit, I mean nothing but Unity, and any one besides Him multiplies. "[4]

We can forsee in the two discourses an overlap between the Greek and Islamic fashion in the sense of "remoteness" of God, an overlap resulting from the way we conceived in the past"the opportune" between the superior and the inferior. And this is the relationship that Ibn Arabi has referred to , asking the condition that the descent is from the top, as God allows and as it turns out. It is what brought it further, since he has unambiguously determined the beautiful to the majestic. Al-Kindi, also insiststhat the philosopher does not look for"neither sense nor figuration " in the divine knowledge.

Martin Heidegger : Beauty " in " art

What has been studied by Ibn Arabi and other scholastics, philosophers, and Sufi Muslims were also studied– although in different terms - in the Middle Ages by theologians and philosophers from a Christian point of view. We could summon the positions the ones and others as follows: no definition of art is possible outside of the religious perspective itself, which is what made the acts of humans - we can relate to a certain "beauty", i.e. "art" simply - are a subject of suspicion on one side and a subject of alight definition on the other.

It is what we undoubtedly find at Al-Jahiz, Ikhwan Assafaa, Attawhidi, Ibn Khaldun and others [5], and in Thomas Aquinas and other theologians of the Christian Church [6].

Thus we can only describe the essence and value within the divine.

Thus the early exegetes are an obstacle to credit any action, word, and any behavior that is immanent in its substance to God Himself, and His own actions.

That's what made that any former discourse about human works have been credited to the field of ethics in the best case (which is evident in the notions of acceptable and unacceptable in the old Islamic discourse, as Christians). And that's what made that any analysis of The beautiful itself has necessarily been a "light" description in its charges and definition. This is what also makes European return to the theory of "nature" (the Greek

foundation) the basis of beauty, and made "imitation" the way to achieve that beauty. A great passage that allowed the art to shift to human work, it is now possible to study outside the religious perspective.

There is no need in this study to present the history of the formation of a distinct singular field, and independent of aesthetics in the European and Western philosophy, but I will make an attempt - with broad outlines and quickly - to graspHeidegger's discourse and his study entitled "The origin of the Work of Art" which cutsoff with the current Western classical philosophical aesthetics. What is it of Heidegger thus ?

Heidegger published his article in a book entitled" Ways that lead nowhere", but he declareda highly philosophical opinion. " The origin of art " would be according to him, " in " art itself. It thus cuts off any relation of art - whether it is of origin , reference, or value - with anythingbesides him, whether it is religion, faith, or metaphilosophy. Art " does not come " from God and " does not refer " to Him, nor to nature ; Heidegger does not make of it an excellent modelto follow. The steps of art do not lead to these old beaten paths, but to other new ways present in the paintingitself, in itsmaking ,even in itspresence.

Those who are familiar withthe article of Heidegger know that he exposed it at the beginning in the form of a conference to his students between 1935 and 1936 ; he then added a chapter there during the publication dedicated to the painting of Van Gogh depicting a pair of shoes. In short, Heidegger meant that "the origin is the starting point of (the thing), its fate in essence, and how it is" " the cycle of thisorigin is defined, therefore is limited to its own movement during the formation, and so it becomes according to its own process. The origin is what it becomes. In spite of its simplicity ,it is a definition which contrast sharply with a long and dense history consisting in a religious and philosophical belief in the existence " of an original " indicated before the creation, that it is as a God, in nature, or in metaphysics.

Thus Heidegger has come up withthis definition, highlighting the difference between the thing (the material from which the shoe is manufactured), the product (the shoe itself), and work of art (the painting of Van Gogh depicting a pair of shoes). It is that the image-depictionto which the work of art has ended, is limitedto its "artistic character", i.e. to the work of the artist on it.

We even find an echo of this approach in the achievements of several European artists before the conferences of Heidegger: of the artist E. Munch and "his call" (during which the color lost its referential function, i.e. a depiction of the outside, human or other) to the impressionist artists who carried the scene of his intrinsic "naturality" towards what this infant scene in the eyes of the artist, who wentthrough the attempts of Cubist

and other currents which eliminated - by the technique of "Collage " - the "naturality" of what is depicted, i.e. complete and true nature and "external" to Art. I cannot obviously pass besides , even briefly, what Kandinsky said ; art is a "latent need" before being an "inspiration" or a conformism with references and rules coming from the outside of the artist himself.

Whilegoing back today to the renewed artistic styles, we are convinced that the assertion of Heidegger (then Jacques Derrida and others after him) is confirmed even more in the current artistic experiences: we don't deny the existence of various and contradictory artistic currents… What should we say when going back to our study: between inspiration and plagiarism, as stated before?

Between absence and presence

On this subject the researcher has reached some observations that help, or rather prepare, to approach the subject in question. First is that the old overlap here and there between the divine and aesthetics do not exist any more in the art discourses (even if it still is the subject of a follow-up here and there by divergent theologists between them). This appears in the delineation of the new boundaries if we can say between the two fields; "divine aesthetics" does not have to prohibit the appearance of "aesthetics of human work" (whether it refers to the religious perspective or is detached from it). It is what several Western philosophers and researchers have legitimated for centuries (at least starting from Kant which sees that the "finality" of art is "intrinsic for him") and it is what is justified in the fatwas of several Muslim sheikhs like the Imam Mohamed Abdah and others the "legitimacy" of an aesthetic located in human work and accept it.

The second observation concerns the old persistent overlap between aesthetics and ethics, and which start to collapse. The proof is that "the despicable", the "violent", the "low", the "factitious", and "the villainous"… can at least constitute images of artistic beauty; and it is what appears in some expressions of the surrealist art and which strongly reappears in certain artistic experiences of the last decades.

The third observation refers to the perspective of art and to what I call "the aesthetics of absence" changed into "aesthetics of presence" on which art is based today. Before, art discourses have sanctified God so as to limit aesthetics to Him; it is what the researcher Alain Besançon directly expresses speaking about the Islamic discourse : "In Islam, the image became inconceivable because of the metaphysical concept of God" (8). The actual discourses are based on the "philosophy of presence", they then managed more precisely to call on what I call "immediacy of the eye". What the painting, the theatrical or cinematographic extract, or the advertising poster,require is defined by what

the eye sees by itself, in front of it, in the incipient and suggested relations on the material support, in the language of the "mediator" itself (like the color or the movement); and it is what we can summarize in the famous English expression: "what you see is what you see" and anything else, if I ask for more explanations.

The fourth observation refers to the relation of art to the value; it requires more perspicacity, or even a treatment because it addresses what I mentioned earlier - without explanation - while speaking about "choice" and "preferences" [1]and that I will briefly approach to try at least to find a possible answer to the equation posed in the title between "inspiration" and "plagiarism". About which value is it? How to define it?

Max Weber finds it difficult to define the value contrary to others which do not distinguish between what they are convinced of and what they consider as "value", and between the fact that the value is nothing else but a "preference". For Weber the value is actually difficult to define because it is a condition of reality, i.e. an explanation, a legislation. Thus, he speaks about "poly-value" and uses in this subject a French word "polytheism" referring to the diversity of gods and values. From his point of view, this indicates the difficulty of reaching a consensus or an agreement leading to a compromise between "axiological"choices (i.e. Including the ethical values, and esthetics) between the human individuals or groups. It is what I noted before when approaching "the presence" and "the absence" (and all that results from this) like present divergence or multiplicity in the definition of the value: Does the value

1 The author probably refers to the second observation on value judgments hateful, violent, low, dummy [translator's note]

Come from work of art from outside? Is it supported by a reference, a religion, a belief or a given creation?

It is a debate which concerns calligraphy itself (which covers the forefront of this conference): Does the value of calligraphy come from its Arab linguistics, the binary construction of some of its works which joins between the read Arabic alphabet and the artistic sign? Aren't the chances of the Arab individual (or who reads Arabic) broader than others? Does the value of calligraphy guarantee its artistic pure spirit? Or should it be referred to specific earlier references to the artistic creation ; religious , linguistic, cultural, artistic and different references…?

I have reached some conclusions that extend beyond me as a researcher, since we end up by asking a question which arises - as I said - at "the choices" and "the preferences"; it should be answered by "policies" and "styles" which include the researcher only as an investigator, an observer and participant in the debate. What is it about?

Our present Arab art appears in the artistic studies and aesthetics over which it

leans, “impoverished” or orphan since it does not have tutors in its discourse. Several artistic and aesthetic issues studied by others (in particular in the Western discourse) were not posed and were solved; I would even say that our artistic practice seems technical in the best cases. To speak “about authenticity”, “heritage”, “inspiration”, “plagiarism” and others is nothing more than one remote attempt of remote Renaissance discourse which we could not renovate, improve, and develop.

I would go even further in this review to say that our approach of art (according to the Western model and such as we spread it in our societies) lacks bases since it appears in certain cases - as I wrote to a great Arab artist - “He paints as if he was apologizing”.

In fact, we have reached modernity despite of ourselves, or without clearly discerning its outcomes and effects; not even hinder them or empty them of their vital contents. Do we really need art? Which are our choices? Which are our preferences?

These are important issues that we should not neglect or defer, as we should not hide in certain cases behind the answers of “demagogy”. Is it logical to want art in our societies and to still avoid image production in our behaviors ? Can we really avoid the image or some of its products in a globalized society where the writing has become “picturesque”, while the image “has been“ generally “written” in our old societies? Is it logical that we want art, and that some of our policies and behaviors prohibit the theater performances and cinemas for social and many other reasons?

Do we really want art even though we have not yet recognized what Luc Ferry calls “the individuality of the Beautiful” (9) .We are still arguing art and beauty from the collective eye till nowadays.

NOTES

(1) Mohieddine Ibn Arabi: Kitab Al-Jalal wal Jamal. Published and presented by Abderrahim Mardini. Dar Aya (Beirut) and Dar Al-Mahabba (Damas) 2002-2003. The quotations refer to this edition.

(2) Sherbel Dagher: Madhaheb Al-Hosn: Qiraa Maajamiyya Tarikhiyya Lilfounoun Al-Arabiyya. Arab arts center; Beirut and Casablanca in partnership with the Royal Association of the Art schools (Amman) 1998

(3) Maqalat Al-Islamiyyine; p. 155

(4) Al-Kindi: Rasael Al-Kindi Al-Falsafiyya. P. 104

(5) For a detailed version, see chapter "Al-Sinaat Al-Moustahsinah" in: Sherbel Dagher: "Al-Fenn Al-Islami fil Masader Al-Arabiyya: Sinaat Azzina wal Jamal" Arab Arts center; Beirut and Casablanca in partnership with "Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyya" (Kuwait) 1999

(6) See Umberto Eco: The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas; dedicated to the study of the aesthetics position in the religious discoursein the European Middle Ages. PUF Paris 1993

(7) Martin Heidegger: The Origin of the Work of Art,: Paths which lead nowhere. Translated. Flammarion, Paris, 1986

(8) Alain Besançon: The Forbidden Image; Beech, Paris, 1994. P. 32

(9) Luc Ferry: Homo Aestheticus: The Invention of Taste in the Democratic Age. ED. Grasset and Fasquelle, Paris, 1990. P. 20

Islamic versus Western arts in the depiction of space (XIVth - XVIth centuries)

Dr Amal Nasr

The surface in the work of art is the space, i.e. the symbol of the world. Painting is initially a spatial art which is based on its expression on the spatial images. Thus the themes which it suitably depicts are the visual elements extending in space. Certain artists defined the image as the fact of reviving a flat surface by means of the space rhythm of the forms and the colors, and that the painting is the art of color distribution on a flat surface in order to create the sense of distance, movement and touch, as well as the sense of the extensions coming from the formations of these elements, as well as the sense of the extensions resulting from formations of these elements. No artist can produce a work of art as long as he did not acquire deep within a definite conception of the idea of space.

The issue of the depiction of space has taken on special importance throughout the art history. It reflects the conception of the human being of the space and his attitude towards it; a conception which is influenced by all material and spiritual variables in every period of the civilization. This issue should not be considered outside these variables while they constitute aesthetic and artistic problems having their own history as important and fundamental elements of the formation of the work of art. These elements have been treated in different ways from one culture to another from one period to the other one. We can say that each time has its own conception of the space, a real common denominator between all its arts and resembling a real window out of which we lean towards its particular world.

This research aims at carrying out a comparative study of the vision of the space by two civilizations: the Islamic and the Westerner during the same time between the fourteenth and the sixteenth century, the golden age for both when the Islamic civilization witnessed its development and the Westerner went through the European Renaissance. The study focuses on the approach of every culture to space in painting. In spite of the temporal parallel, arts of every culture treated the space in a totally different way as we

will see it. We will manage to deduce by reflection and observation the methods every civilization treated the concepts of space and the vacuity in the pictorial works.

Significance of space

Space is the potential and possible movement; the sense of space, in its essence, is the perception of a set of diverse directions and possible movements from which the relation between a point and another is defined. Perception of space is an awareness of a given shape, even if this shape is ever the simplest (in the scale of priorities). Extension or space is a simple existence separated from everything. It is possible to be conscious of a space without feeling its limits; it is what urges us to believe that this space is infinite. If our perception of the space included a perception of its limits, we would had have perceived it as composed of a finite number of palletized masses side by side.

The aesthetic effect of spatial extension

The aesthetic effect of the spatial extension is completely different from that which comes fromdelimited forms. When the eye is perceivingthe extension, it wanders infinite and unlimited places; it is the sensation of the contact of its places between them and their infinite dimensionwhich is at the origin of our reaction to space. It is obviously the primary reaction that has physiological bases, while the conceptionof the volume is secondary and includes connection and deduction. But in spite of the important meanings of the volume, there is a particular aesthetic value in the pure sensation of area based on the direct effect which the subject creates in the sensory capacities of the eye .Since the effect of the extension is different from the effect of the material, both effects appear in their clearest images when they are together. The effect of the extension only gives full satisfaction if it is added a given material beauty. (1)

We do not feel a complete happiness when we face a situation of total vacuum with the presence of an extension or an infinite space around us; it makes it difficult to definethe dimensions and the positions and to measure the space as well. What we cannot define weakens our ability to measure the time; the sense of time collapses in us, and we become darker. It is indisputable that we are the creatures of space and that the space dominates us, wether we are artists or not. It is because we all react - consciously or unconsciously - with the space which surrounds us everywhere; and moreover, our basic mood/good mood changes according to the changes undergone by the contents of the space.

If the total space is free from signs, the infinite extension is an autonomous sensory perception. However it constitutes a challenge for the painter because it creates an indefinite and unconscious desireto **define it in a detailed way and add an** architecture

which organizes this space in various dimensionsand in several spatial relations. In most cases, the painter meets the visual and psychological challenge to transform the space and the infinite extension into space having a given shape, (2) that is a space. Thus Max Beckmann (1884-1950) says: the height, the width and the depth are three phenomena which I have to reproduce at the same level of abstractsurface of the image. This is the way I protect myself from the infinity of the space.

The way of filling the space

When we encounter the vacuum, our imagination becomes animated and our ideas and feelings mix. Reaction to the vacuum takes one of the two following directions then: the first is a logical direction. Considering the wide vacuum surrounds us day and night, we try to logically understand it while trying to measure it and define it in a way organized and precise with two or three dimensions. It is the direction to which the approach of space during the Renaissance belongs. The second direction is the instinctive approach (axiomatic in the Arab direction debadihien) - since we adopted at the time of our recognition of the space of the intuitive axioms - followed by the projection of our feelings and the noblest ideas and sublimes on what we carry out. The artist translates this instinctive answer to space while using with profusion of lines and points in a way not organized at the time of his attempt to define the close and remote reference marks. It is the direction which the painting of space in the Islamic miniatures took.

When we face **the issue**of the space, our imagination livens upand our ideas and sensations mix; this response to the **space takes then one of the two following directions: the first** oneis a logical direction. Given that the vast space surrounds us day and night, we try to understand it logically by trying to measure it and to define it in an organized and precise way with two or three dimensions. It is the **direction**to which belongs the approach of the space during the Renaissance. The second directionis the instinctive approach (axiomatic in the meaning of badihi in Arabic) –since we adopt during our recognition of space of the intuitive axioms - according to the projection of our feelings and the noblest and most sublime ideas of our realizations. The artist translates this instinctive answer to the space by using a lot of unorganized lines and points during hisattempt to define the close and distant marks. It is the orientation which the painting of space took in the Islamic miniatures.

Expressing the instinctive choice in the answer to the vacuum, the German painter written Max Beckmann: “the vacuum then the vacuum, it is this majestic entity and infinite which surrounds us by all shares and which exists in us… It is this entity which I try to express through painting… My dreamed is the vacuum as I imagine it… To try to change the visual impression of the visible world which surrounds us by means of the

rise and the organized rise of our ideas and our interior feelings… It is sensory perception according to my point of view. It is certain that we must transpose the world of the three-dimensional things which on the web surround us with two dimensions. As for me, I consider that the expert testimony magic and rooted in me is this aptitude to personify the space by means of lines and of colors. By this aptitude, I feel the fourth dimension, unknown factor with the things and the beings. This dimension which I search by all fibres of my heart. " (4)

Factors which influence our way of perceiving the vacuum and to treat dimensions of space

It is the time or the civilization which gives to the work of art its form and impose its contents. The history of the artistic forms is closely related to the models of human behavior which create in their turn the perceptive behavior. In fact, the process of the vision from the physiological point of view remained the same, what changed it is the explanation that received the visible image. As we can speak about the historical evolution of the perception since the new methods of vision depend on the historical periods which produce them, we can also speak about the manner of perceiving space because the perception of space is the expression of a delimited model of the relationship between the man and his environment; thus each society developed its own artistic perceptions and that all its members were influenced by the aforementioned developments.

Life also, and the acquired personal experiences can in their turn largely influence our sensory perception by means of the vision, quite as they bring times to its modulation. The experiences which make us acquire a particular style influence our feelings and thought about our sensory perception when we reach maturity; they can even lead to influence the way we explain the visible world which surrounds us everywhere.

We cannot deny either the spiritual factor and its influence on our perception of space or the vacuum. As asserted by Hauser "the sight is not a simple function among the functions of the eye, it also includes an expressive factor stemming from the spiritual trends which explain reality and shape it". Thus all the wills eschatologic in the art history adopt the idea of the rejection of the vacuum and forsake the realistic depiction of space, influenced in that by their design of beyond. The forms are reproduced in a shallow abstract isolation without depth and environment surrounding it.

Our way of seeing the world influences also our manner of approaching space dimensions and the way in which perceive we them; on this subject, To raise known as: "Actually, the gilded sky and the prospect are not right two different manners to treat the background, but they constitute two characteristics belonging to two different manners to see the world: one takes the human being as starting point, the other takes the world. One

affirms the priority of the forms colored on space whereas the other uses space as element and bases on which rests the sensory experiment and which prevails on the materialism human being; thus, space absorbs human forms and assimilates them." The covenants whose cultures (dynamic) expansionist which take a positivist position with respect to the world regard space as principal statement to look at the world; they represent their images in a space context connected, and it is what appears clearly in the art of the Renaissance.

In fact, each civilization has a universal design of the world which she proposes when she treats space, this space which represents near the artist the equivalent of the universe. It is the current design at a given civilization which delimits its reference marks and forms the screen between the elements of its knowledge. "Our design of the world is so important that we realize that we have a given design that when we are in front of an alternative design, that is to say while travelling towards another civilization, or by becoming acquainted with information over the times spent, or when the manner that has our civilization to design the world is changing." (5)

We will be able to add to this last expression: when we know the art of another civilization because work of art always reflects our design of the world. Surface punt of the fabric is the symbol of the world of the artist whom it designs and draws according to the current design that its civilization of this world has. The idea of time was always related to that of space and influenced it; the artists considered that space and time are constituent essential life and that on them two only that the code of practice must be based. We will try to present a compared study of two different visions in the representation of space; we will start with Islamic arts and we shall approach then the Renaissance.

ISLAMIC ARTS

Treatment of the man and nature in Islamic arts

Abstraction is the general characteristic of the Islamic thought. Arts of the Islamic civilization presented aesthetic and philosophical values which express passion human being of the research of the absolute and the attempt to understand the laws of the matter spiritually. Islamic arts result from an aesthetic and philosophical vision which understands the human being and nature all while taking as a starting point the Moslem religious vision, translating this inspiration in an artistic language of good quality and pure. We cannot understand Islamic art apart from this vision. By observing the work-witnesses of Islamic art deeply, we notice that nature with all its components is present in the form of plastic elements; there are not almost a kind of plants, of flowers, trees or animals – as well as the man – who is not represented in a miniature, woven in a carpet or incised on a metal. It remains that the relation of the Moslem artist with nature is a contemplative relation, and non-mimetic; it is vis-a-vis nature as a part of it, just like the trees, the birds, and the stars are part of the universe and return thanks to the Creator. This

universe with all its natural and human demonstrations is a universe symbolic system and representative; and when the artist uses the demonstrations of this universe in his work of art, it does it in their capacities as symbols in the absolute not-delimited by a time or a space.

When the man and nature appear in Islamic art, we cannot take them as subjects which describe and imitate the man and nature. Islamic art does not search the design of the external world as the directions generally perceive it, with its antagonisms and its spontaneousness, which it describes in an indirect way it is the constant petrol of the things. Islamic painting is generally based on the instinct; it starts with the sensory experiments to extract from them these features characteristic of a given object or a creature which it then translates into the elements - which are appropriate for the two-dimensional vacuum - by means of the feature and of the colored surfaces. The Moslem artist does not conceive the attempt to transpose the integral aspect of the things, it is conscious of the nullity of this approach because it is convinced at the origin of the transitory and illusory nature of appearance, therefore of its disappearance and its dislocation. In that, it does not yield with a religious interdict as much as it answers an aesthetic or philosophical vision which converges with total religious comprehension and integral human being and of the life. Here's what led the Moslem artist to realize that the truth is latent, and that one can express it only by exceeding the apparent one who is perceived by the eyes. (6)

The theory of the incarnation in Islamic philosophy

The theory of the incarnation (al-Hulul) is the theory of the Unicity of the existence (Wehdat al-Wujud) suggested by the Moslem Sufi; it indicates the incarnation of God in the existence or the material and spiritual world; It is the Great mind (Arrouh al-A' Adham) incarnated in the universe and all that it contains. The theory stipulates that God and nature does only one and that the material universe and the human being are only manifestations of the divine petrol. The theory of the universe in philosophy of al-Kindi and at Ikhwan Assafaa speaks about a harmony between all the things of the world; that appears clearly in the unit of the system of the unified, coherent and harmonious universe in all its parts. The parts constitute in fact a unit based on only one principle that it is in the sounds, the structure of the universe or the spirits of the human beings. Sciences of the universe base themselves on the reciprocal relation between the things and on the Unicity of the nature in which the human being discovers the direction of coherence and the balance specific to the world. In addition, the human being in the Islamic faith is a momentary phenomenon, prone to the extinction and not eternal, and the constant universal truth is not represented in the momentary phenomena. This thought is followed

in artistic dimension by several results: the representation planes human factor, and the treatment of nature as being a plan with two dimensions.

The theory of the universe in Islamic philosophy also leaves at the origin from the point of view the close relationship between philosophy and art in the link between the concept of "marvelous" (al-Rai' I) and the human life, and more precisely "the human being". It acts of what turns around "the holistic harmony" which continued in the philosophy of nature and the rational philosophy of Ibn Sina (Avicenne) and al-Bayrouni in a more abstract form and where each part fulfills a precise function in the general aesthetic system. The idea of holistic harmony which understands in its petrol the aesthetic functionality of the things and of the phenomena in the world which surrounds them indicates that any partial petrol, whatever the negligible sound value, flows in the flow of the general beauty of the existing. [(7)]

Time and space in Islamic arts

We consequently do not find in Islamic arts a temporal designation, nor space. Temporal not-designation relates to eternity as a philosophical state; there are no really indications of seasons or times and the events proceed according to the principle of the "perenniality" – which will be posed later on by Bergson. There is thus a research of relative time but psychological as the fact testifies some of finding the day and the night in the same scene. The color is also based there on the principle of exchange, contradiction and complementarity without the control of the measurement of time fixed by the hour, and without taking account of the changes which occur in the color in the distance and the distance. With all that, Islamic arts composed the property of the temporal expansion. In parallel, these arts carried out the space expansion also, and thus by expressing dimensions, they transform the surface of work of art into field filled of representations and colors without conforming and delimiting a given position.

Islamic arts thus do not seek to design the external world as the directions commonly perceive it with its antagonisms and its spontaneousness, since these arts rest on the belief which the world is transitory and passage. What they describe indirectly it is the constant petrol of the things; Islamic arts answer an aesthetic and philosophical vision which converge with total religious comprehension and integral human being and of the life. Here'swhat led the Moslem artist to realize that the truth is latent, and that one can express it only by exceeding the apparent one who is perceived by the eyes.

Thus the manifestations of space do not constitute a part in the topic of work in Islamic arts. Through its opposition to the logic of visual, represented, and reality, a work

of art also avoids space, and temporal designation, since it represents a keen research of the absolutes in these designations. The artist does not paint the things as the eye sees them at one time given and according to a given visual angle because he wants to paint each unit in its reality, stripped of these momentary conditions like the light, the shade, the appearance and disappearance, advance or the retreat. They are transitory states which disappear when their causes disappear, and changing with each time the person which looks at exchange itself, or changes her place compared to the thing; states which also change with the change of weather.

It is what explains why by observing the Islamic miniatures, we notice a freedom in the manner of expressing time and the space which disavows the logic of the similarity and symmetry. We can see in the miniature Persians of the rocks which seem to flow like waves, a sheet of pink tree, a blue horse, or in the same landscape at night sky and sparkling meadows as in full day. Islamic art is based on the instinct, eliminating the transitory sensory phenomena because they prevent the instinct from achieving its goal.

We are thus in the presence of an art of symbols and conventions rather than of reality and events; it is an art which does not stick to the real space phenomena, but rather takes space its rules and its systems as they appear remote and close, high and low, flat and in relief because it takes as a starting point all the laws and the systems cosmic and natural which control space, nature and the human being. It joins together them and manner organized and autonomous with its own rules and systems within the space of a work of art unifies them.

There is thus no place for the vacuum in Islamic art as an autonomous element able to have a direction; it Very often represents part of the whole of the system of the work of Article, the Moslem artist intensely fills space in his pictorial works not like horror voice or by fear vis-a-vis the vacuum as some claim it but rather for properly spiritual reasons "the artist wants to dominate space or the matter by replacing them by a movement (a dynamics) which is addressed to the spirit" (8).

Aesthetic vision in Islamic arts and its effect on painting of space

The Moslem artists created an Islamic vision specific to them and which considers that the goal of art does not consist in imitating nature, that the imitation is not the base of the value work of art, and that quite to the contrary it is based on the creativity. It is a question of creating a new world which can be different, even contradictory with the sensory demonstrations of nature, and even with its reality. They discovered indeed that the work of art exceeds the manifestations of the "world represented and the told history; it is an organized world and a world in miniature where the forms and the colors take

their places according to the latent reasons in a work of art and not with an aim of miming nature. Thus the Moslem artists created an independent world which hardly resembles nature, a world of colors which extend in the form of plane surfaces and abstract. The prospect was eliminated and one moved away reducing from the things under the effect of the distance, just like they worked to make disappear completely the shades and modelling as well as the climatic effects. (9)

On the basis of this aesthetic point of view, the Moslem artist painted space and created his own means. Like all the sacred arts, Islamic art is the fruit of an original rational contemplation or a spiritual vision of the world or méta-universe. This objective could not be reached without to have beforehand made leave Islamic art the world of the prospect and the directions towards the world of the symbols and the intuition. This art managed to translate the Moslem faith into a language, styles and aesthetic principles clean which could live and persist in then giving to Islamic art its distinctive seal in any time and any place.

Depicting space at the beginnings of Islamic art

With its beginnings, Islamic art was influenced by the Iranian arts, Greek, Byzantine and Chinese. Gradually, it started to add its own esthetics until releasing itself completely from the styles who do not agree with his vision, and of which in particular manners adopted by these arts in the treatment of the prospect.

When we study the works appeared in the first times of Islam like those of the Rock of the Dome or the mosaics of the Omeyyade Mosque in Damas representing the topics of the palaces, buildings, bridges, turns and alleys surrounded by trees and generally located along the rivers and of the fountains, we notice a typical use of the shades and an attempt to treat space dimensions by means of the linear prospect, even in a rather primitive way. Certain issues are covered according to the Chinese prospect which locates the focal point behind the spectator and giving the impression to him to be part of the scene which surrounds it. The roofs of the painted architectural buildings have a pointed and winged form resembling the Sino-Japanese buildings perfectly. (10)

Islamic arts got rid later on of these suggestions and the attempts of prospect, figuration and shade because they did not go hand in hand with their own design, their esthetics and their methodology. This proper methodology - different - in the manner of treating space appears with conviction when we compare the representation of the buildings in quoted mosaic (705-715 a. J.C) and that of the buildings in the school timouride during the 15th century when the aesthetic vision reached its plenitude and got rid of the influences of former arts. In this case, one gathers several focal points in the

same painting so as to gather several places that one cannot see in fact when one looks starting from one only focal point; thus appears a transparent vision which reveals all the corners of the building and gathers the interior – which is not supposed being considering – with visible outside, and the events inside the building with all the characters moving. Here is how the Moslem artist displays his forms according to a particular prospect, impossible in reality but serving its artistic objective.

Depicting space in the Islamic miniatures

The Muslim artists thus created a clean aesthetic vision which converges with the spiritual concepts suggested by the Islamic religion; we clearly recognize this vision in the Islamic miniatures with its various schools. As Shaker Hassan indicates it, artistically, it reaches a degree of plenitude which reflects the artistic logic of painting in Islamic arts where unite quietude in the abstraction of space and the movement in the figuration of its subjects. The miniature is an art which understands the abstraction and the figuration at the same time through a vision located in a median zone between the values of beyond and of the terrestrial life. It is an art which represents a manifestation of the idea of the figuration not-appeared through the form in two dimensions. The principal subject is picturesque surface but the direction is found in the representation of the character and his translation in the form illustrated in not the opposite as it is the case of Western illustrated painting.

The miniature presents a language to us which we understand by means of our spiritual existence; it is in that nearer to the piece of music to the auditive structure. It is not like the carved composition with space structure and perceptible material condensation with the directions. The miniature is a structure which it is necessary to understand through its invisible or suggested rhythm; it is not important there to see the human being and the elements of nature as entities in themselves, but rather to perceive the abstracted system in which these illustrated elements are. It is a system which could not have been valid while being based just on the form painted in itself, but rather on an "arrangement" of which the parts are connected by the elements. The elements carry a movement interns and a rhythm conscious of the infinite extent of the existence in spite of their calm appearance which lacks visible space integrality.

It is a perfect harmony between the movement and the immobility because it only turns intoa world of two dimensions and does not exceed it towards reality. (I.e. A harmony between the event which one wants to paint who is three-dimensional and the two-dimensional physical surface of the form). A balance enters a thought to abstract trend and the need for expressing it in a non-abstract way. It creates its terms starting from nothing… through space… towards the existence… without completing its development while falling into research from the material world, i.e. the figuration. [(11)]

The miniature reduces the importance of the dialogue between the mass and space

in the context of the appearance and the release of the color, the light and the form; release of the yoke of the natural forms in order to express spiritual energies in a human mould. It transforms the manifestations of the universe and its particles into an icon which one can contemplate. While being occupied by the multitude of elements and forms, it tends to control the components of work and to incorporate them in a single unit on the basis which any work of art is a universe in oneself which is equivalent to these concepts. The Moslem painter did not seek to reproduce reality, he considers that the material needs must be always subjected to the internal and spiritual needs in order to reach the unit and the perfection.

Islamic miniatures, Persians in particular, are characterized by topics of the life of Eastern as the scenes of “battle”, “duel”, “fight”, “topics of hunting”, “stories of love, of heroism, epic, of nobility, honor, knighthood”… The painters of the miniatures carried out these topics in the middle of the spellbinding Eastern nature with its romanticism and of the elements rich in luxuriant colors, lights, trees, flowers, plants, animals, rivers and mounts. The man is closely related to nature there being an essential component among other elements with which he lives in harmony. There is in this unhafts a trend connect the image of the unity of the work carried out by the artist with his general design of the unit of the universe. In the miniature, material dimension joined spiritual dimension in a dense aesthetic, vital and spiritual image artistic.

The miniature is an “image in miniature” of the spiritual and material world of the Eastern man where various arts meet: architecture, painting, music, poetry, dance and decoration in a harmonious unit which expresses a single artistic vision encrusted in the general structure of the composition of the miniature and through a beautiful flow human being in nature, so that small world of the miniature carries the organization of the high society created by God. [(12)]

It should be noted that we find in the miniatures a splendid reflection of the Koranic illustration of Paradise and its various descriptions reported in the hadiths of the Prophet and speaking about what it contains like sensory and spiritual pleasures. The painter tries to exceed the hard environmental conditions in his illustration of the gardens in the Islamic miniatures. In a general way, the garden reflects the relationship between the man and nature, but in the world another vision is added to the concept of the gardens considered as an image in miniature of the Paradise. Islamic architecture was distinguished on this subject by what one could call “the paradisaic theory” or “the theory of the environmental opposition” in an attempt to place the terrestrial gardens and paradises inside a natural environment marked by hard climatic conditions with an aim of improving and to embellish this environment. [(13)]

The miniaturist reflects this same vision in his presentation of the events in the

middle of the nature which seems a garden of Eden even when the topic treats the conflict or the war. That invites us to contemplate. Indeed, when we contemplate (let us closely analyze) the multiple Koranic verses and the hadiths about the terrestrial and paradisaic gardens, we are subjugated by the precision of the Koranic description from which the Muslims were inspired to reproduce the principal aesthetic elements in their painting of nature in the miniatures. We can say that the Muslim paints in the miniature a reduced image of the Eden or Paradise and tries to find inspiration in the mechanisms which reflect the majesty of divine creation. The miniature (illustration 1 at the end of the work) which paints "Humay and Humayon in a garden" 1440 a. JC is an illustration of this concept.

We also notice that in the painting of the miniature, the Moslem artist does not give to the human body a particular importance or a characteristic position; it paints it as a part of the screen of the work which does not enjoy any particular status: it is thus a reproduced flat and broken up into a set of features and of reasons which have the same degree of importance as the other elements. Its shade and its weight disappear, and it does not constitute in itself a topic of the work of Article the human being often has a small in the miniature where it is integrated in the middle of the manifestations of nature, equivalent to its other elements and not being distinguished any; he belongs to a singing nature woven with beautiful embroideries (illustration 1). I chose in this study the Islamic miniatures Persians to compare them with paintings of the Renaissance because of their contemporaneity (14th with 16th C.) whereas the Arab miniatures shone before this period (12th C.) and the Turkish miniatures during the successive time (17th C.

Some techniques of representation of space in the miniature Persians

The spiritual perspective

Painting in the art of the miniature Persians expressed space through what one called "spiritual prospect" are presenting the things through a total sight which is not limited by a narrowed field of vision; sights of all the angles exits of infinite and inconstant points. The artist joins together projections of these sights and extends them on only one surfaces who becomes a kind of plate or shelf revealing all the formal characteristics integrated in the unit of work of art.

These sights which are directed towards all the things and their differences in the depth of the existence, and these things which do not have limits are collected by the artist which transposes them in his work where they appear on the background of the pictorial work dense and punts. They help to explain their existence who plunges towards the distance, and are imbricated in the cosmos of the image with an extreme density. Then, we do not see the place of the observer of these objects: is it extremely far or extremely close to them, or in their depths? The distances and spaces are welded in this new figurative universe.

The vertical perspective

Persian miniatures confirmed a new depiction of space; they occupied pictorial surface in entirety with several characters, only or in groups, distributed at different levels by using a very simple tool making it possible to have a horizon raised on the painting. This simple technique consisting in making of all surfacespaints a platform of natural landscape involves the illustration of several levels of prospect superimposing one with the top for the other in the page or pictorial work. It can become pre flowered, a garden where the trees appear in various places towards the raised horizon, or the theatre of an event like a fight or a war. This technique was called perspective vertical; the artist entirely fills there pictorial surface with several characters, only or in groups. They are distributed at different levels by using in the painting a high horizon. Most of pictorial surface is transformed into a platform made of a natural landscape extending until reaching the higher limit of the painting.

The illusory perspective

A new tool was discovered to obtain the effect of prospect at the time of the reproduction of space in the miniature Persians. This technique was largely used in the paintingss of natural landscapes while placing a hill in the background of the landscape, which gets for the landscape a situation when it seems a slope or a chasm. The horizon is expressed by a stiff oblique in the landscape revealing the characters with the extreme background of the image as if they climbed the hill which is inevitably in the back; their heads and their shoulders point above this illusory horizon. In other cases, the characters leave from behind a small hill which occupies one of the corners of the painting. It happens that the artist places mountain ranges in the natural landscapes, which makes it possible to imagine the extent of space perfectly suggested besides by the appearance of whole armies which advance behind the mountains.

Suggestinga sight from a high place

The treatment of space in the miniature Persians presupposes that the spectator looks at the scene with the multiple angles, dimensions and sizes starting from a high place so that the artist is not obliged to illustrate the characters or groups the ones with the top as of others. Thus the artist represents a building as if he saw it of in top whereas the rest of the scene appears on the level of the glance starting from two different angles; this divergence does not pose a problem with the artist nor with the spectator since none of them require that either the image perfectly in conformity with the things as we see them. The Persan painter had to face a field of “suggestion” rather narrowed, limited to the use of a dimension vertical and horizontal and deprived by the effects which the shades, the prospect and the illustrated representation get. But in spite of this handicap, he managed to express what he wanted with alternative means; he suggested the retreat in space while

placing the remote objects at the top of painting and the close relations below. [14]

This manner of treating the components of the space which presupposes a sight of a high place avoids with the artist illustrating the characters or groups the ones with the top of the others. The artist managed to express what he wanted with alternative means; he suggested the retreat in space while placing the remote objects at the top of the painting and the close relations below or by having recourse successively to order the elements of the composition on the sides of the painting. This manner of placing the elements according to this order suggests an automatic impression of existence of the vacuum; a trend which is also confirmed by the release of space in the middle of the painting in several miniatures giving a species of balance and balance in the composition of space.

The oblique as a means of expression of depth

There was recourse in certain miniatures to the oblique lines to express the depth of the field and to treat the plane surface by means of oblique movements of the forms. The contents of the elements illustrated and their relationship to the tension in the surface are carried out by means of the curved lines which are in dynamic relation to the rest of the components of the painting. The element of the movement is carried out in its turn in the direction of the depth of the field. This manner of treating a pleasing surface with the analysis of the rigid structure of work by ordering the elements in an oblique way to the oblique top of platforms creating at the spectator an impression of the diversity of the obliques and space living and variable rhythm in work. The artist incorporates the forms in the painting so as to always invite the glance of the spectator towards far, without sudden or violent rupture which would create a visual barrier preventing the eye from arriving at the bottom and the background, or then by resorting to the fitting of the forms on the sides of the image to have the depth in a conventional way bringing to create a rupture in the painting influencing the force of the design. (Illustration 2).

The vertical section of space

The Moslem artist used in certain cases the technique of the vertical section of space in his miniatures. He carries out the vertical division of space by means of several vertical elements producing an effect of depth of field resulting from this successive fitting from the elements in space. The spectator starts with a brought closer sight then the glance continues towards the depth of the image through these vertical passages. This longitudinal formation which makes move the glance to the top then bottom develops and shows particular visual styles in the figuration of the place. It is a treatment which suggested a new solution to the imagined illustrated vacuum, and brought to a freedom in the manner of treating the elements so that they are adapted to this form of vacuum. This new form of composition brought to superimpose the elements the ones with the

top of the others and to present them in succession and in a tended and interdependent dense way; they thus presented a new visual composition in the representation of space. (Illustration 3)

Tangled up levels

In Persian miniatures, the artist used the technique of the levels tangled up to express dimensions of space; the glance is not attracted through a fixed point in the vacuum but through a set of lines and of colors which guide the glance. The forms moving cover a group of surfaces partially tangled up the ones after the others so that part of the other forms remains visible. But we notice that all the partially tangled up forms leave the same base line as if they were attracted by it, just like the paired figures are not miniaturized in prospect, the artist them included not in the depth of the field of the painting and does not separate them by shades. It is satisfied to color them with dark and clear colors in alternation, and connects a level to another with the means that some shared and dynamic forms creating a kind of unity and solidarity. Islamic arts are in the final analysis arts of symbols more than of arts of facts and realities, arts which do not refer to temporary real appearances. They are inspired that all the universal laws and all systems which govern space, nature and the human being. That appears in their regrouping and their unit on the surface of the work of Article Islamic arts suggest solutions for space which are not based on the transformation of the things and the figures visible into masses with the palpable material density. Whereas the painting of space in works of art of the Renaissance was based on the imitation of nature by means of the scientific geometrical prospect, Islamic arts adopted the principle of the intuitive sight in painting of space; they do not try to imitate the visible forms and the vacuum which surrounds them but rather to charge them with a dialectical significance inspired of human imagination.

The era of Renaissance

Humanistic philosophy and the painting of space

Italy was during the Renaissance the theatre of the resurrection of the Greek humanistic philosophy which makes human existence the center of the existence of the world and which regards the human directions as the centre of attraction of knowledge. The humanistic movement aimed at rebuilding the religious traditions without touching with the petrol of the Christian faith as it was during the Middle Ages. With the beginning of the 13th century, the Italians started to be less and less interested in the religion and to dream of a human fraternity. At that time, one saw emerging from their social context of the very dense sentimental outpourings towards the things of the life; this feeling then developed until the birth at the 15th century of humanistic philosophy, and everyone incensed the human being as being the center of the universe.

Italian artists have discovered since the 15th century "the human being" and analyzed its physical constitution, the nature of its reactions, the various aspects of its intellectual trends and its moral ideals. They also delimited its place in nature, the proportions of its parts, his relationship with the geometry, its predisposition to the movement and the action then his relationship with the natural context. (15)

This attention was a kind of rehabilitation of the man and the life following the period of the Middle Ages which did not pay great attention to them. It is what explains the consensus about the return to the civilization gréco-Roman since she recognized the human being and the life. There was consequently a return to the concepts of art gréco-Roman and with the ideals fixed by the Greek philosophy of Article These concepts considered nature, and the human being in particular, source of the perfection and the beauty. They have even worked the divinities in the form human being, considering that art was to imitate the human being in its best sporting proportions (the gun), its best forms, its nobler ethics and its higher ambitions. The ideal of art in Greek philosophy required the imitation of the nature in the most precise possible way, since it represents the joined together truth and the beauty. The artist was to thus imitate it in order to be able to communicate this natural truth and this natural beauty with his artistic work with less possible deformation. This imagery constituted the philosophical base of any realistic trend in art and the artistic ideal in Europe until the end of the 19th century. It is what explains the preponderance of the laws of the illustrated representation, the formation and the movement in paintings of the Renaissance until reaching its apogee later two centuries with the three crowns of art: Leonard, Rafael, and Michel-Angel. The artistic form became open, not isolated from the space context which surrounds it, but immersed inside. (16)

It would also be necessary to note the influence of the middle-class class in the countries where this class prevailed, particularly in Italy and Holland then in the countries of Western Europe where this influence widened reflecting itself in the art of painting in the form of a detailed and structured investigation of all the phenomena external of the world, the desire to discover the terrestrial world and to enjoy it. This investigation was transformed into a research in the field of the illustrated representation and the discovery of the laws which govern it, the movement, the treatment of the shade and the light and the interest carried to the dissection. That also brought to ask the question of the space born of the need for delimiting the sites of the bodies the ones compared to the others. It was then the greatest revolution operated by the artists of the Renaissance, i.e. the discovery of the Prospect in its complete form. It is the technique of expression and illustration considered as most representative of the Renaissance in the field of the depiction of the space and whose influence on art continued in a decisive way until the 19th century. (17) We will return to this in more details.

The idea of time during the Renaissance

The Greeks conceived time in a circular form without beginning and end. This circular time always turns over to its starting point and supposes a movement of the sphere around itself; it is repetitive and limited by the space movement, since one measures it by it, or it is measured by him, more precisely. It is marked by monotony, the similarity and the resemblance of its parts. It was the object of the whole Greek thought with values of order, proportion and selection. These values expressed by the art of this civilization om ended up prevailing quietude, stability and balance since when time achieves its cycle of rotation, this cycle is delimited by followed rotation and even the movement is in the final analysis allotted to a fixed center. These values were reflected not only on art greco-Roman but on the art of the Renaissance. This art made a point of representing space dimensions in a way connective and homogeneous, just like it made a point of carrying out the harmony and the space-time unit in the work of Article the very whole prospect and all the rules of proportionality and architecture were only means of achieving the ultimate goal: repetitivity of the sight and coherence of the logic of space construction according to the idea of circular time presented by the Greek thought.(18)

The concept of space during the Renaissance

Until the 14th century, one neglected the distances between the objects and the people, it was the importance symbolic system and sentimental which governed their organization on the surface of the fabric. That applied to remote cultures from each other in space and time. Some explain this fact by the fact that the universe in the art of these times was an immutable world compared to a given landscape of which concentrated sight influence orientation of the things in the vacuum. It was there also a aware to be it as an entity independent of the things and the world; it is what governed the negligence that one observes in the reproduction depth of the field or the reproduction of the third dimension in the art of before the Renaissance. In fact, the depth appears with the will to include the point of view of the observer and the awakening of the relation which binds it with the topic of work of art; the being moves in space according to three pillars: in top, bellow, then on the right and on the left. That presupposes to position the human being face to face with the topic and the world, since one reproduces the things in work of art with the observer at the same time. It is what is occurred with obviousness during the Renaissance so much so that the English word “space” was not used before this time to indicate the interval which separates between the objects in English language. (19)

Space became for the Renaissance the essential foundation of the visual approach in the world; an approach born of the realistic and dynamic culture of this time which has a positivist position towards the world. The forms were placed in a continuous space context, space was built starting from a harmonized prospect directed towards only one

focal point, and the topics and space distances located between them were painted in a continuous way. It is only starting from the Renaissancethat painting was based on the presupposition of space where the things are infinite, continuous and homogeneous element, and which we see the things in a recurring way, i.e. with an isolated and static glance. One presented to us an image of space built on a prospect punt characterized by the equality for the degrees of clearness, a harmony of all the forms in all their parts, the existence of a break point common to all the parallel lines, and on the homogeneous unit of measurements of dimensions because of the interest growing of the role of the spectator and the introduction from his point of view into the work of art considered as the extension of the visible world. It is thus space became during the geometrical and environmental Renaissance; the objects were placed according to a point of view fixed and delimited by its relationship to an ideal observer and a single moment of the movement or a unified action. The prospect was considered the average ideal to connect the spectator and the objects represented between them. The break point was a good tool to unify the scene in its totality in keeping with the glance of the spectator.

The symmetrical construction of space during the Renaissance

Any spectator observing a work of art, a statue, a building, a poetic kind or a musical work of the Renaissance will realize that it appears a balanced symmetry there, harmonious and geometrical clearly inspired by the Platonism rediscovered during this period. It is from there that was born the idea that symmetry is dependent on "the relation of the parts with the whole". What means that the external building that it is the framework of apainting or a literary kind or an architectural construction is the element first of the welded elements to which the various parts belong. From there, construction during the Renaissance is a closed system of which the goal is to control the event reproduced.

The influence of the Platonism which tends with force towards the symmetrical model started with the use during the Renaissance of the vacuum in all intellectual works. In astronomy, one sees it in insistence on the plain spherical celestial bodies around a center and which move according to a regular movement; in the dramatic arts they are the three units of time, space and action; in the anatomy it is the idea of the superimposed osseous parts; in poetry it is the poetic structure; in the music it is the quatrain; in architecture it is the architectural harmony and the re-use of the Euclidean geometry; in painting this current appears in the use of the scientific prospect plain-focal distance. All the forms in the painting of the Renaissance are parts of a space which moves towards only one focal point which – ideally – is in the middle of the construction which contains it and on the level of the glance of the spectator. There is also an impression of distance created by the illusion: indeed, the objects smaller or located higher or imbricated within the framework of the painting are more distant, without this distance not being infinite since the glance

always stops with something or a material point which imprisons it. Space is limited and delimited, and the objects which are imprisoned in its field form a symmetrical and interdependent system in their relationship to the construction which contains them.

Theories of Copernic and the art of the Renaissance

Arts of the Renaissace were influenced by the theories of Copernic which presented in the field as of sciences the first illustration of this insupportable desire of the structural system and of harmony. One imposed on the ground the three simultaneous, synchronized movements and circulars of the axial phases day labourers, the annual orbital movement, and the conical annual movement of the axis. It appeared later that these explanations were arts persons and aesthetic rather than mathematical and scientific. Copernic was more interested to find a "structure" coherent than an exact mathematical solution of the movement of cosmos. It was encouraged mainly by the existing divergences between the reliable old sources and in which Copernic saw the incapacity of the authors to manage to define the form of cosmos and fixed symmetry between its parts. It compared the old ones to an artist who painted each part of the human body in an excellent way without these parts not belonging to the same precise body; the parts not being adapted the ones to the others, the result could be only the image of a monster, not of a human being. Copernic thus read all work of the philosophers who were interested in the question, it had then recourse to the old literary references and proved in its writings what it thought of being right from the aesthetic point of view. It found the design symmetrical total which it believed to perceive in the universe, and was convinced that the stellar system and the celestial bodies moved all while being connected the ones to the others; it is impossible that a part moves without causing a chaos in the rest of the parts and the universe in entirety. Thus the idea that Copernic was made universe is the same one as that of the artist of the Renaissance; Leo Batista Alberti defined esthetics as being "the harmony of all the parts, in any demonstration, so that they adjust the ones with the others in a way proportional and welded; one can nothing add to it, remove some or change there without attacking the unit." It of east follows what one called the system of the "hermetic forms" in the painting of the Renaissance and where the painting appears impressive of a total organic unit which gets a clean autonomy to him without it needing additives. One of the characteristics of this hermetic form is the agreement which appears in the attempt to create a vertical and horizontal balance between the two halves of the painting. In the field of painting, the most notorious result of this new mentality was the use of the scientific prospect at only one focal point widespread during the Renaissance. In order to manage to understand creations of the period of the Renaissance, it is necessary to consider the structure of work of art as being made up of principal built masses which form a system that one can subdivide in simpler components and of which each one is part of the unit.

Measurable space

Work of art belonging to the Renaissance seems a finished and continuous unit; it is in its simple and homogeneous petrol. It does not leave the occasion to the spectator to stop with a given detail or to insulate an element distinct from complete work, on the contrary it pushes it to perceive all the parts simultaneously. Thus the scientific prospect at only one focal point was the means of expression more adapted to illustrate space in the painting of the Renaissance. He affirms a clear vision of the center and uses a framework retinal made horizontal straight lines, verticals and, to organize visible information of a given image; and it is only after having done that it extracts some from the oblique lines to create the impression of depth, carrying out perfectly the idea of symmetry and harmony in the structure of pictorial work.

Work of art during the Renaissance is generally stable and facial. There is a broad space with which one equips the subject to be painted. The event generally begins on the level from the framework and is turned over directly towards the interior, towards the point where the importance of the subject concentrates. Thus is born the energy understood in work, not by the material fact but by the tension present in the things, in their relationship with the structure. Therefore works of the Renaissance are defined like a static system of interdependent objects with equal tensions, each object holds the others, and they remain static and stable by the effect of the general structure which understands them.

At the end, space during the Renaissance became a space divided geometrically into equal divisions; Leo Batista arrived from there until saying that "painting is anything else only one cross section of a visible pyramid on a surface given, represented in an artificial way with colors and lines at a given distance, in a fixed central position, and organized lights." Painting thus became measurable whereas it was not it before since the concept of space to the Middle Ages in Europe is completely different. The painter was interested then in the psychological relation which connects the things between them and have nothing to dohas nothing to do with the material distances between the beings. The most important form was in the middle of the painting and took a size larger than all the others, without taking account of the space relations. [(20)]

The depiction of space through the geometrical prospect

The prospect in itself is not an invention of the Renaissance; the Greek painters and the geometricians of the Roman epoch played a part in the invention of the prospect. However, these times did not know the painting of space builds according to a homogeneous prospect directed towards only one focal point, they were not able or did not make a point of painting the various subjects and the space distances locating them in a dependent way; space was composed, understood dissociated parts, and was not founded on a homogeneous connection. It was a space of aggregate and not a systemic

space. Moreover, the attempts at Giotto did not give the complete scientific solution of the problem of the prospect until the arrival for the scientists for the Renaissance. The latter were the heirs to the old traditions and provided us scientific bases of the prospect which are still present until our days. They managed to define the theory of the third dimension; Brunelleschi (1377-1446) and Alberti (1474-1515) and others were the pionniers of the foundation of the scientific bases of the perspective.

Definition of the perspective

Several critics and artists studied in their writings the prospect trying to define it and draw with light its rules; we find among these definitions what follows:

1. The prospect is a set of rules enabling us to draw volumes of the things on a surface with two dimensions by reproducing the differences in the aspect or the slope born in their position or their distance. A given thing is drawn on a fabric according to its position by means of lines controls in their dimensions and their directions by the rules of the prospect, whereas the space prospect created the impression for distance by means of the shade and colour gradations.

2. The rectilinear prospect is the drawing based on the basic principle which considers that the spectator positions with respect to a horizontal line located at the level of his glance and that the things whatever their position have the points of their first surface connected to a break point located on the horizon in the form of gathered rays. Thus the rectilinear prospect reproduces the forms similar to their position in reality but observed starting from a point of vision whose position is defined with precision. The prospect is also the science which mathematically defines the positions and volumes of the successive masses in the third dimension starting from the visual angle and in its basing on a horizontal line which defines the level of the glance.

3. The prospect is the style which takes account of the way in which the thing drawn according to the visual angle appears adopted by the artist, it be-with-to say under the level of the glance or with the top, according to the proximity of some of its parts or their distance, and finally according to the direction of the light which illuminates them.

4. The prospect is this law whereby the visible things acquire their third dimension which is the depth of field; the visible things do not appear punts right in length and width. This law is founded on the fact that the bodies appear increasingly small according to their distance of the line of sight so much so that two parallels appear narrower while moving away from the line of sight until seeming to cross illusorily with the eyes of the spectator if they move away sufficiently.

5. The prospect is a style of drawing of which the goal is to create a relationship

between the form and the platform a given depth. The prospect seeks to prospect the artistic possibilities specific to the horizons ready to move and narrow with several degrees, with an aim of defining a stable scale of the contracting of the objects according to their sites, whether it is with before or with the background of the image.

For Alberti and Piero Della Francesca (1416-1521) the prospect is summarized with a sign on the way of the world of the sensory experiments, a means of clearing up the space relations, and a tool of visual knowledge. Della Francesca defines the prospect as being the representation of visual subjects by far on the surfaces varied according to their distances. [(21)]

Merleau-Ponty considers that the prospect is not a copy of this world, but a free interpretation of the automatic sight. The prospect as a style to see the visible world resembles the organization of the subjects of sensory perception within a framework which governs their reports as they appear to the draughtsman, than it is in the depth, the setting ahead, the size, smallness, rise or the touch. [(22)]

Alberti and Brunelleschi roles in the presentation of the science of the perspective

Alberti (1404-1472) created the geometry of the Italian prospect in its famous work relative on this subject. It defined the painting as being a section of a pyramid being composed of rays on the basis of the world towards the eye. He says about the prospect in a letter addressed to Brunelleschi: when the painters draw the contour of the forms with their lines and fill of their colors the indicated surface, they should have of another objective only to reveal the visible things as regards the image as if this plan were of transparent glass which crosses the visual prism and which fixes the depth, the illumination and the point of view.

Brunelleschi is one of the pionniers of the idea of the prospect; it designed and produced a device which personifies practically the rules of the prospect. It is about a painting which represents a baptistry in the Cathedral of Florence and seen starting from the central door of the Cathedral and the Palate of the Province; vis-a-vis the painting it installed a mirror and practised an opening in the form of hole to which the eye is stuck.

The sculptor and architect Antonio Averlino (1404-1472) studied the invention of Brunelleschi and the possibilities that this last opened to paint space according to a harmonized prospect differing from the former pictorial treatments. He considers that if the old ones had known to use these standards, their works would have been definitely better. He gives of it for proof the representation of their buildings: we observe in certain cases which the characters are taller of size than the houses, in more they visually represent the high and low sides of a subject at the same time. The knowledge of the rules of Brunelleschi makes it possible to the painter to represent each subject according to

criteria of which it lays out and who constitute a guide of all that must be painted enabling him to place each subject in its place without falling into the error. [23]

The scientific use of the perspective in works for Paolo Uccello

Paolo Uccello (1396-1475) was interested in science of the perspective and concentrated on the research of the secrecies of this science become for him a metaphysical belief which diverted it moreover. He regarded the prospect as the key for the reason to understand the image of the universe. He was diverted religious, humanistic values and history, making of his art a kind of abstract application of his mental theories; he was even resolutely diverted to suggest the third dimension, being satisfied to draw the lines according to the rules of this science.

Uccello gained profit consciously from the possibilities from the prospect using it in an intentional and conscious way, not being limited so that it gets for its works a certain resemblance to reality but rather like tool to build its design or its prototype. The characteristic of Uccello is its use conscious of the means which he had under the hand. In spite of the fact that it was in full possession of the sensitivity to the tactile and pictorial values, it used this donation only to find solutions with the problem of the prospect and to highlight its capacities to overcome the scientific dilemmas. That means that he was not an artist who drew in a subjective way thorough by his feelings since he did it with a voluntary way, awakening and mental project conceived before.

It thus produced paintings where was drawn the most possible lines which can direct the glance towards the center of the fabric. It painted the died horses flat belly, knights, the casualties, the broken arrows, and the meadows plowed with the service of the design, as we see it in his painting “the Battle of San Romano” (Illustration 11) where it took care to show his aptitudes in the representation of the prospect and to follow his rules (of gradual contracting) as we observe it in his illustration of the warrior to the curled up face. Uccello used the foreground of the painting to suggest the depth of the field and drawing the javelins broken in oblique directions directed towards the bottom. It benefitted from the background also where it painted long ways which grow blurred from the point of view or of the images with several characters, even if their sizes do not correspond with the depth suggested by these ways. Just like he did not take account in the colors of clothing of the remote value of the color which remained strong and intense as it is the case of the red, yellow and blue used. He would even seem that the background rose of its natural site so that the ways represented by the prospect appear there. Work seems to have two horizons one corresponding to the level of the knights, the other with that of the background. [24]

The three paintings of Uccello relating to the Battle of San-Romano do not have in fact any bond with the human sensitivity, nor with the history; they rather constitute an

imaginary world invented by intellect in spite of the elements of nature which appear there. What included them in artistic works it is the beauty of their architecture and their design.

The mixture between perspective and history at FRA Angelico

FRA Angelico (1400-1455) took a particular attitude towards the prospect by mixing it with the history. He considered that the history was not the history of the man as far as it was the history of Divine Providence; the prospect in its turn is not a construction abstracted to perceive the image of absolute space, but rather a mental means to discover the interior perfection in the constitution of the beings, and by there the perfection of its originator and creator.

In its painting entitled the Annunciation, it mixes the prospect and the history; one sees with the foreground of work the Virgin Mary with the Angel announcing the good news of his immaculate pregnancy to him. On the basis of this introduction, the meanders of the corridors painted according to the technique of the prospect bring us to the show of Adam and Eve driven out of the Paradise; thus the artist founds a bond between the original sin and the birth of Jesus-Christ.

The legendary dimension of the prospect in Piero della Francesca

Piero della Francesca was interested in the prospect and wrote about it a scientific study regarding it as a need to paint the things according to their right reports. The prospect meant for him visible subjects painted by far on given surfaces; painting is the representation of surfaces and masses reduced or increased and their setting on surface of the image in accordance with the real things sights by the eye of several visible angles: he considered that "there was always in each body a part closer to the eye than another; the closer part appears on surface under an angle larger than the more distant part. Considering our intellect is unable to measure these distances, dimension is necessary to define in its capacity as exact science the visible size of each body, while indicating to us with lines the length which must be curtailed or to lengthen."

The sincere interest carried by Piero della Francesca with this technique is clear in its works which treat the perspective. He was used not engaging in a work given before studying it sufficiently. Its titrated work the Scourging of Christ (1455) is a good illustration of the interest carried by the artist in his works with the prospect. We notice indeed that the architectural composition and the analysis of space are definitely more important than the subject of scourging in itself. The petrol of work of art for the artist is hardly the religious incentive, it is rather the study of the perspective.

Same manner, the painting entitled the Crowned Conversation (1472) shows that the interest of the artist related to the representation of the world to three dimensions;

proof is that there exists in the traditions of the ancient world no bearing account on the Virgin Mary with a pearl, nor no other painting similar to this one representing the Virgin with a pearl. It painted there the pearl in the shape of an egg whereas the Virgin Mary is held in a broad niche of semicircular form. It thus appears that the concern of the artist is to represent an oval form in a half-circle, i.e. the technique of the prospect in the religious representation and not event in itself. (Illustration 12).

Works of Piero Della Francesca indicates that it did not stop with a control of the technique of drawing with the prospect but that it exceeded it by choosing a particular kind of prospect which enables him to carry out a "legendarity" suitable for space. He believed that the science of the prospect – as artistic element could impress the images of the things with a species of eternal universality. He succeeded in printing values sublimes in the results of the prospect and the modules of forms of his paintings; the natural human forms and landscapes answered this geometrical idealism that the Renaissance tried to realize and whose space was one of the elements: Della Francesca represents his characters as if they lived apart from the borders of the time and the space which surround them and like part of fabric of the fabric and not as tallies or stage set. However, he does not deny the sensory experiment since one sees it in each recess of his works, but he deduces this sensory experiment from his space-time tangles to transform it into total geometrical system. [(25)]

Leonard de Vinci's role in the development of the central perspective

Leonard de Vinci (1452-1519) developed and explained the prospect for Alberti while choosing to apply it an angle of his workshop overhanging the town of Florence. He painted on a pane the landscape vis-a-vis him while having sat on a chair, the glance fixed on a point located at height of the window (the lock for example). He thus could have a point of horizon fixes parallel with the axis of his eyes, and place on two points of this line – the one on the right and the other on left all the creepage distances of the perspective.

If Alberti worked out the geometry of the Italian prospect, Léonard had the merit to place this prospect within a quadrangular framework equipped with a center and a principal line consisted the horizon with crossings formed by the vertical limits of the painting and the lines which are parallel for them inside the framework. Léonardo thus fixed the sides of the fabric parallel with its window and relating to gravity of the ground, or rather to the position of the artist. We see thus that the eyes of Léonardo constitute the central truth of the landscape. Being given that he regards the fabric as a transparent window giving on the visible world, then its limits must be in conformity with the limits of this window and its center connected to the body material reality of the artist. Léonard thus treated with the existence illustrated like statics and nondynamic. It thus became

necessary to arrive thus at the example of the "open window" as it named or the total illusion of a uniform space environment.

Léonard knows painting and known as on this subject which "painting is the only imitator of all visible works of nature. The painting which deserves the most praises is that which resembles the thing represented more." He also insists on the importance to represent three dimensions and recommends to the young artists to necessarily learn dimension and the proportionality from the things, saying on this subject: "What one initially requests from painting it is that the illustrated bodies must appear in relief and that the landscapes which surround them with the effects of the distance must appear hidden inside the surface of which the image by means of the three parts of dimension emerges; i.e. to narrow the details of the shapes of the bodies in volume and color". Léonardo supported its ideas on the prospect by important studies. By studying the depth of field, he says: "what space if it is not depth? The depth is the single form by which we can express space". [26] works of Léonard clearly express her design depth like means of solving space, and its conviction of the importance depth like forms ideal to express space; it often used nature in background of the form to get the necessary depth to him. But nature in these works appears as the background of a play whose role is secondary to supplement the painted scene Its illumination is weak and misty and its presence is unobtrusive. Moreover, in-depth range is abrupt and not-progressive as if it were a work of application aiming at carrying out one of the aspects of the theoretical idea of the problem of the air perspective.

Differences in the depiction of space between the artists of Italy and those of Flandres

As we indicated previously, realism, revealing of the beauty of nature, and the interest carried to the man and his world constituted the most obvious signs characterizing the art of the Renaissance compared to arts of the previous times; a realism which required the search for means of materialization and suggestion of the third dimension. This research was shared by the artists of Flandres and those of Italy in spite of the difference in styles (resulting from historical diversity between North and the South from Europe; the Italian artist, because of the classical past of Italy, considers that the values rational and relative to this world are more important in its work of art, whereas the Flemish painter of North bases himself on the values symbolic systems and emotive because the medieval traditions are still present at North). The Italians based thus themselves on the talent and liveliness and arrived at the science of the prospect. This science which is only one mental invention with its straight lines which meet in a point was used like a net to catch reality and to lay out the things each one with its place on surface of the fabric compared to its illusory distance. The artists of Flandres on the other hand counted on their directions and tried to

accurately reproduce what they saw their eyes, and using to suggest the third dimension more chromatic differences than the perspective.

This difference between mental realism of the Italian artists and sensory realism of the Flemish artists also appears through their treatment of space by means of the shade and the light. In the Italian art of the fifteenth century, the shades are generally clearly delimited as if they were stuck to the bodies which they make re-appear, giving the impression that there is between the bodies a vacuum within the space of painting. In the artists of Flandres, the shades and the lights are in general made up of degrees of opacity and of transparency which interpenetrate and drive in the middle of a space which appears without limits.

"Space" constituted for the whole of the Flemish artists a determined place, i.e. this part with its precise walls or this natural landscape, one calls this trend "sensory realism" though it is necessary to take this name with a certain reserve. Indeed, the Flemish artist trusts indeed directly his sensory capacity to approach a determined space, but it adds to him at the end the quality of absolute entity. The part is transformed between its hands into a whole world, a world closer to the design (metaphysical) that sensory reality. Space for this school is not a simple space whose intellect delimits dimensions but mixes with the image to become Lr base about it and the material.

It should be noted that the Renaissance in the area of Flandres was characterized by a particular tradition in the manner of painting the natural landscape and to treat space with it. The landscape understood several personnageshumains of small very, arranged in groups at various distances in an imaginary field. We see it for example in the paintings of the brothers Van Eych for the Retable of the Cathedral of St-Bavon in Ghent, and especially in the painting entitled the mystical lamb. (Illustration 13).

It is clear that the artist was conscious of the idea of the surface turned towards the interior, it was influenced by the technique of the lines of convergence and the weakening of the chromatic intensity in the background of the painting. However, when we analyze the linear indicators and we seek a single meridian point, we find that the artist did not carry them out completely; all the lines seem to move towards the lamb. A more meticulous analysis indicates to us than there are two lines which fork on the side of the fountain at, the side ground line of the furnace bridge itself, and other objects present in work. They gather near a group of meridian lines one above the other in the form of a graphic column. This line passes by the column of the fountain and of the lamb then to the top by means of radiations emerging of the crowned spirits towards the dove itself moves. It is obvious that the control of the image of this kind possible by means of a vertical line towards which all converges, and was produced by the slope of the contents of the painting towards the spectator. Instead of having subjects which move towards the

back on the side of the painting, they seem to move upwards without being dissipated far inside, as we see it in work. This style was well adapted to the period of transition of the flatness of the Middle Ages towards the depth of field of the Renaissance.

This tradition was perpetuated by Patinir (1475-1524) and Hugo van der Goes (deceased in 1482). One divided the field of the painting into more controllable sections, one multiplied the movement of the characters and one diversified them, and one used in a different way the prospect and the realistic composition. This tradition knew its apogee with Tintoretto (1518-1594) and Brueghel (1525-1569). The painting of Brueghel entitled Hunters in snow introduces a broad natural landscape subdivided with meticulousness in smaller sections made of farms, fields, paths, ponds covered with snow, and groups of trees and close and remote characters. The painting was subdivided in two parts almost, crossed by an axial line obliques dividing work into two large triangles and separating the surface on which the hunters and that are held which abruptly descends worms from the subsoils furnished with extensions and elements to different dimensions.

In the works of Tintoretto, we notice the regrouping of characters in great number in small scenes inside the large one. The principal scene appearing within the framework of the painting was subdivided in small scenes particular close relations and moved away, constituting each one an image in itself with its forms and its background; the scenes were isolated the ones from the others as if the spectator looked them starting from a spyglass. The use by Tintoretto of the prospect enabled him to fill the image of theatrical medias but without a single pivot. The principle of the central vacuum appeared in the art of the Renaissance was destroyed, a choice justified by the existence of some lines which indicate – from their orientation – that they cross apart from the surface you table . Tintoretto thus presented a development of the concept of the prospect and its graduations grouping of the visual angles which seem impossible in reality; but it benefitted from the opportunities given by the prospect in the treatment for each element separately. It subdivided the principal scene in small scenes differentiated partly and constituting each one an image in itself with its forms and its background.The use of the prospect by Tintoretto enabled him to destroy the principle of the central vacuum in the painting appeared in the art of the Renaissance.

Mutual influence between the art of the Renaissance and Islamic arts

Eastern influences in Western art appeared clearly at the beginning of the Renaissance. Giotto incorporated the Eastern units in European painting and devoted the basic principle of realism to it. It painted the Eastern one in its clothing and its ethnic aspect like the inhabitant of a geographical area which was the theatre of the facts of the Bible and the Gospel and their protagonists.

Thus was born the tradition to paint the Eastern monuments and the elements of nature: vegetation like the palm trees, and animals like the birds, the dromedaries, the peacocks, the lions, the monkeys, the dragons and other mythical creatures connected to the East. These subjects were personified in the pictorial art of the beginning of the Renaissance, in particular in works of Giotto, its disciples and the generation which was influenced by its artistic revolution like Botticelli, FRA Filippo Lippi, FRA Angelo and others. The Eastern formal elements used the painting of the historical topics of the various artistic schools of the Renaissance.

Painters also used Arab penmanship with its most varied forms. Since the Middle Ages and at the beginning of the Renaissance, when they wanted to equip the figure with the Virgin with a beauty compatible with its holiness, they did not find better than the Arab penmanship whose letters were used as decorative units. Arab penmanship drew their attention leading them to study it and imitate it in their paintings: Giotto, Pisanello, Duccio, Bellini, FRA Filippo Lippi and then Raffaello. Their works reflected the coufic writing and are preserved in the churches of Pisa, His, and of the Vatican, as well as the museums of Florence, Berlin, Louvres and Boston.

Clothing and costumes decorated with Arab penmanship were very diffuse also in Italy, which indicates the broad diffusion of decorated and embroidered Arab fabrics of Arab penmanship during the Renaissance. The Christians had taken the practice to wrap the most crowned relics most prestigious cathedrals in Islamic fabric fabrics, and to also make of them the clothes of the members of the clergy. Some of these same fabrics were objects of devotion although in several cases, they were decorated of Arab penmanship including of the texts glorifying Allah.

European artists were also charmed by the Islamic carpet with its made elaborate decorations of coufic writing inside a framework. The Eastern carpet appeared since the fourteenth century in the paintings of the Italian painters under the throne of the Virgin, the feet of the saints, known the couches or covering the ground of the parts and the living rooms. These paintings are of a great importance today because they keep decorative decorations of the carpets of this time which one found no part.

Archaeologists and experts in Islamic art called “Holbein carpet” a kind of carpet in keeping with the painter Holbein the Young person (1478-1543) originating in the Land of Bavaria which maintained the links and had commercial exchanges with the East. This kind of Islamic carpets were rather diffuse in paintings of Holbein. It made the study and analyzes its decorative reasons and in reproduced units which it used in its work. Arab penmanship was present also on clothing and the costumes of the saints, of the characters of the Bible, the kings and on the portals of the cathedrals. The Arab writing had however a value symbolic system among Muslims, which was not the case in Occident where it was used for the only decorative use.

It should be noted that this inspiration of the Eastern iconographic units during this time is not founded on visits with the Islamic East and the observation of its true real image, but as a majority on the accounts of travellers, pilgrims, missionaries and saints. With that the presence of Moslem merchants is added who arrived at the Italian ports, and which provided to the artists an occasion to paint them and to buy their goods. There was also a trade of tools and of production of articles of ornament and decoration which constituted a primary source of imitation of the Eastern decorative units which prevailed in works inspired of the East during this time. This trend was part of Zeitgeist of the Renaissance which is leaning on the ornamentation, description and the details without seeking to transpose the emotional or spiritual state supposed to be present in the biblical and evangelic paintings religious and tragic and their protagonists. A trend which falls under the context of detachment of the religious aesthetic concepts of the Middle Ages.

But the crucial factor which contributed to change the image of the East in the painting of the late Renaissance was the radical change which touched the relation of Europe with the East in the middle of the fifteenth century after the appearance of the Otman State on the European scene after the fall of Constantinople. The religious fight Islamo-Christian woman weakened with the profit of the fight economic-policy. The European States were competed with to establish peace agreements with the Othoman State with an aim of controlling the commercial power centers and the commercial ports of the Mediterranean. The relations established by the European kings with the Court of Sultan Ottoman intensified the Eastern seal in art European and allowed to transfer several Islamic artistic styles from the Otman world towards Europe.

This change was reflected in the way of painting the Eastern unit in the art of Renaissance during the second half of the fifteenth century and during sixteenth, and particularly after the peace agreement signed by Venice in 1474 with the Othoman State and the visit of Gentile Bellini to Constantinople in 1479-1480. The artist accepted an invitation of Sultan Mehmed II known for his patronage. Thus beginsa new era of cultural exchanges between Italy and the Islamic East has started and which influenced the two parts. It also made it possible to provide a realistic theme of-visu on the East, its inhabitants, its environment and its nature. The Eastern artistic elements integrated the structure of the European artistic fabric with this new design which we find in works of Caravage, Titien, and also in those of Veronese and Tintoret like extension of the Eastern influences at the time of the Baroque.

The most important characteristic of the appearance of the Eastern motif in works of the artists of the time was the realism of the form and legibility in the depiction of characters, architectural style, costumes, elements of nature, and in all Islamic applied arts: the carpet, weapons, the jewelry and accessories of beauty. The image of the Eastern Muslim also appeared in the art of the portrait (Sultan Mehmed II by Bellini in 1480) and in the paintings illustrating the official visits and meetings between the representatives of

the Palace of Topkapi and their European counterparts.

The Islamic artistic influences of this time were distinguished by the decorative mark and the fragmentary trend. In certain cases, they seemed foreign bodies cut their origins, in others like a judicious and usual decorative element with the meanings of bringing together the plastic world to the geographical, historical and ethnic reality which constitutes the living theatre of the legend or the religious or historical painting. Orientalism in this direction one of the discoveries of the Renaissance, is integrated in the art of painting with the principles of realism, of the prospect, the dissection, and the new studies relating to the color. [(29)]

On the other side , it leads us then to speak about the efforts made by the Mongolian Emperor Jalaleddine Aboul-Foutouh Mohammed (1542-1605) in the field of painting authorizing the reproduction of the image and inviting the miniaturists at the same time to follow the example of the Western artists whom he invited in/to India. He supervised in person the creation of workshops for this purpose in Accra and Delhi aiming athaving an artistic production which combines Islamic art and Western art. What is most important however, is not in these choices but rather in the results achieved in this artistic production, i.e. in the way of joining the artistic styles brought by the Western artists and the Islamic artistic styles. It is an artistic syncretism in which they paint nature according to the rules of the perspective and the shade and the light with the Western style, and they paintthe human beings according to the rules of Islamic painting. The result was catastrophic, not because they showed diligence, but because two contradictory aesthetics were combined. They did not produce a new controversial issue related to prohibition or permission to reproduce characters but an artistic issue. When after one half-century of the death of Akbar, the painters Mohamed Zaman and Agutian disputed the practice of painting according to the Western rules, they were not based on the fundamentalist quibble of the fekihs but on pure aesthetic concepts. They found that this syncretic style constituted a serious error reflecting a deep imbalance of taste.

Most important it is that the diligence of Akbar did not open new horizons for Islamic painting, but quite to the contrary. Only after fifty years, the aesthetics of Islamic art completely disappeared from India, according to the critic of Baba Douboulou who considers that the influence of Akbar and his successors on his neighbors the kings of Iran is behind “the end of the apoge of Islamic painting”. [(30)]

We can impartially say that these mutual influences between Islamic arts and those of the Renaissance were beneficial to the painting of Renaissance ;strengthening itwith a new vocabulary which enriched it in fine art. Whereas on the other side they damaged Islamic arts by corrupting their own vision and indicating the beginning of their decline. This is dueto the fact that Western artists subjected Eastern vocabulary to their aesthetic vision and presented it in this context. Moreover , artists of the Islamic school were

attracted by the rules of the perspectiveof materialization (anthropomorphism) Western incorporating them in their works, at odds with the aesthetic vision of Islamic arts. It turns out that this trend coincided with the fall of the great Islamic State which started to lose its political prestige. It seems that we have been suffering since the consequences of this attraction towards Western arts although they are hardly adapted to Arab and Eastern esthetics in a general way.

Conclusion

In this study we have tried to come closer to the specific visions of the world to each civilization. We have observed its presence in respective arts of the Islamic and Western civilization during the same time (from the 14th to the 16th centuries.). We have seen that theyconsider the human being as a negligible part in the universal system, it adapts to it and is integrated into it. The other civilization considers the human being as the Master of the universe to which all the creatures are subjected and who imposes its criteria even on the movements of stars and planets. A civilization which tried to explain the existence through an integral and total vision of which it derived the rules and the laws of existence, and a civilization which imposed its rhythm preestablished in all terms of existence. A civilization which is bound with eternity like a philosophical state whose arts suggestto avoid the space-time delimitation and searching the absolutes in these delimitations, and a civilization which insisted on measuring time and space with precision from a given and delimited angle.

We thereby conclude that each civilization was great and produced masterpieces asshown by art history. In spite of their simultaneity, each one has kept its own aesthetic vision completly different from the other and resulting from a thought which represents it and through which it presents its arts. This clearly proves that it is illegitimate to try “to globalize” art.

Ultimately, various manners of depicting space in Islamic arts, and the techniques of Western perspective to depict space during the Renaissance are only different styles, among several others, which the human being invented to project the visible world on the painted in order to place it within a framework which reflects its ideas and its dreams through this magic square of work of art. This study should be concluded by the words of Michel Demitri: “We draw things and we are unable to give them a meaning without a framework which gathers them and brings them back to life; each framework must indicate space and time. Thus all the things are painted - sufficiently - in time so that we know our position, such as the rings crossed by our look on the background of a painting which exceeds the things”.

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Orientalism and the identity of Arab-Islamic art

Prof. Moulim Laroussi

Throughout our modern and contemporary history, the Arab-Muslim artist was not able to get rid of the stratagems of Orientalism and the traps it sets: even when the artist or the critic does not support a particular Orientalist position, it resumes another Orientalist thesis. These ideas emerge when we examine an important moment of the Arab art history; aniconism in Islam. Indeed, while certain artists justify their proscription against the depiction of humans and animals, as a refusal of the image by which colonialism, following Orientalist theses, has always labeled Arabs. Defenders of depiction support the idea that it is at first necessary to regain the image which we lost, before drawing up a different profile in the fight against the Other.

Both positions ignore that their attitudes are inspired by an Orientalism of some description. It is because the pictorial Orientalism is the tendency which dominated the relation between the West and the East in the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. In this context, the Arab Maghreb generally, and Morocco in particular, took the lion's share in terms of staying and visits by the main figures of Orientalism. After Eugène Delacroix's visit to Tangier and Meknes during a diplomatic visit in 1840, Orientalists having a great fascination for the East, continued to visit this country. Orientalists favored Morocco because they thought it was the only country which was not, as they prefer to call it, "tarnished" by the Ottoman culture. For them, Morocco remained a soft and wild earth in the rough: "there is nothing more beautiful in the Greek antiquity than the white clothes and the half naked riders(…). They are closer to nature in different ways, their clothes, the shape of their shoes. Beauty unites with all what they do" [(1)], writes Delacroix to one of his friends. These enthusiastic allusions and remarks coming from a great figure were a motivation and even an invitation to visit Morocco, for a large number of painters fascinated by the exoticism.

Indeed, this is how the Italian Stefano, the Spanish Fortuni, the Englishman

Brabazon, the Dutchman David Robert, the American Tiffany and the Russian Pawel went to Morocco as well as a lot of Frenchmen among whom, Planchard, Horace Vernet, Rigneu, Benjamin Constant and the Orientalist the most fond of Morocco, Alfred Dehodencq who settled down in the Andalusian city of Cadiz to be able to move easily to Tangier and Essaouira.

At first sight, this interest in Morocco is bewildering, because nothing in this country is consistent with the European values of that time, those of the radiant French revolution in particular. Morocco was indeed considered as a country characterized by intolerance and an incredible violence in the Christian West: in the narratives of the European travelers, the governors of this country are described as bloodthirsty. Algeria had been then already colonized and preparations to occupy Tunisia, and Morocco, had been in progress.

Modernist artists in the Arab Maghreb perceived the above-mentioned opinions of Delacroix as an insult to their secular civilization and culture: they found in the themes treated by writers, travelers and Orientalist artists' arguments justifying their hostility to these positions and this intellectual orientation. For instance the great French novelist Gustave Flaubert and his novel Jericho « … ». We do not know where Flaubert saw these images nor if he wondered if such shows have existed in Europe in the 19th century. Anyway, he presents us a bloody and violent world wherein there were a rejection of painting and a total hostility to any image.

Why all this? " As it is known Islamic life and thought are too much linked with the religious rules.TheMaghrebconstantlyrefers to the Qu'ran to discern good from evil (…). Art, is also subject to its religious determinants. It collapses, since the Hejira, under the heavy prohibition which limits and prevents its development ", asserts Bernard Saint-Aignan [(2)].

It is the most widespread idea. It is curious that it has been accepted by Arabs and that it is the final image that they have of themselves. The image is thus of rigor, the cruelty, the almost biological idiocy which reflects their hostility to the image. However, fortunately, there are Orientalists and unbiased researchers who have raised questions to update the subject, even if they did not definitelycorrect the mistake. We will not obviously focus on the racist ideas, whichmore or less insist on the rigor and the cruelty, because these ideasdate back to the crusades and remain anchored in the most advanced European thought. But we willbe limitedto the image and painting which, constitutethe topic of this conference. In this respect, denying the relationship between the ban on imagein Islam and its founding texts, Oleg Grabar declares: " at somepointin the dominant Islamic tradition, around the 8th century AD, there was an objection to image and depiction in the art which was still unknown back then " [(3)].

Grabar refers to this idea to confirmit during the presentation of Valerie Gonzales's

bookpublished in 2003 that she devoted to an aspect of Islamic art. “We collide” he says, “with a contradiction between the doctrinal sources and societal customs about painting in Islam. Thus, hostility towards the image in the Muslim world and the proscriptionagainst the depiction of human beings is part of the general customs of societies,of which we do not find any trace in the most authentic religious sources. This subject, whichhas been much talked about until 1980, then it has been absent in the last decades as if there had been a consensus on the position of Islam as for painting and depiction.We indeed recognize that there was a lot of arbitrary power and imposed point of views from the outside world thathas been familiar with the image. This is evident in the number of studies exclusively reserved to the proscription. “

Obviously, this position differs from all otherOrientalist points of view. Although Grabar only mentions this issue inan allusive way, It is a question of a Western expansionism which does not hesitate to extend the military triumph to culture, to the thought and art. Until today, the West is defined through the concept of the Renaissance. In addition, it is well known that the Renaissance is based on the scientific and cultural level of the ideology of the Reconquista, which was used by the Vatican to indicate the reconquest of Andalusia. Furthermore, it is well known to all that the reconquest of Andalusia [(5)], as it pleases historians to refer to it,coincided with the colonization, and not the discovery, of America and Africa, and it ushered in a dark period in the history of mankind, namely “colonialism.”

The concept of colonialism required the redefinition of cultural, religious, geographical and historicalspaces. So, the West was obliged to rename things, people and periods of history. These names based on religious, racial and pseudo-scientific beliefs have not been reviewed untiltoday. Therefore, all stereotypesof Arabs, because it is rather much more about Arabsthan Muslims, are the result of this idea. The West has excludedthe Other especially Arabs and Muslims from history and since then has started to rewrite the history of mankind. Based on what ?It is based on its doctrine mentioned earlier.

This is how it excluded all mankind from art history. Mankind has been divided into civilizations knowing writing, named the East, and civilizations foreign to it, by primitive tribes, while the power of the writing, the image and the noble culture was attributed to Europe. The East then refers to China, Japan and a large part of Africa. Similarly,it could be limited to the Arab world to which are added Turkey and Persia. It is the image which we began to have on the Arab world from 1492, after the fall of Granada.

In art, the name of the Arab world has been linked to the hostility tothe image, because travelers and researchers, who will be afterward considered as the Orientalists, have not found icons in the mosques as is the case in their churches. This standpoint, which has no scientific basis, has been expanded and has been absolutely set as a

stimulating thoughtfor researchers and an impetus to research that will multiply according to Grabar. This thought, which we call "Orientalism" today, tried to argue the thesis of Muslimhostilityto the image and accused Islam to be the religion of the forbidden par excellence, a religion founded on the suppression of desires,concupiscenceand creation. The researchers then struggled to find the hadith that may reinforce their arguments without making the effort to check if the sources of these hadiths are authentic or weak.

Thereby Oleg Grabar's standpointdiffers from others, even if it remains a little incisive: he says that the issue of aniconism in Islam ceased to be debated in 1980. I do not know if I should givecredit/credence to his point of view, because at the important conference which took place in Aix-en-Provence [(6)] in France in which I participated, this position remained unchanged. The current Arab-Muslim civilization specialists, who do not share the same ideologies and doctrines, that their Orientalists predecessors presented a vision of humanity based on scientific progress and advancement of ideas and beliefs, were unable to get rid of the Orientalist legacy. They have a kind of intellectual laziness or rather a confidence in the heritage that makes them blindly repeat what their predecessors have said without any hindsight. Should we blame them?

Two answers are possible:

The first is about these researchers' generations which refuse Orientalists' label and prefer instead that of the specialists. This category of researchers is responsible for not grantingthe necessary interest in this problem, unlike their colleagues specialized in Far East. We indeed know that the Asian civilizations were integratedinto the art history as it was the case of the African art, but the Islamic art was excluded.

The second share of responsibility is attributed to the Arabic researchers who resumedthe Western researches without any critics. There is obviously a clear answer to this criticism according to which the structures of research in this domain do not exist, as well as other arguments which are not completely false. We hope that we will end up this conferenceby finding asolution.

Our problem today depends on two factors: the first one is to make sure that the Arabic thought stops interiorizing the image which the Orientalism anchored, and the second consists in rationally integratingpainting and Arabic art into the world art history. The first way is somehowclosely relatedto the second; because, if we succeeded in clearingthe way for Arabic art through the universal artistic context, all what is left is to promote this intellectual orientation via the modern media. As a result, if we want to get rid of the complex of historic inferiority in art, it isnecessary for us to reviewour historyfrom an archaeological perspective far from any doctrinal confinement or any colonial ideology.

To achieve such an analysis, it is first of all necessary to recognize something fundamental: there are no people or civilizations which do not produce images, eitherto

boast themselves or make sacred what they can be, whatever their power is. The images and the means may differ, but the historyteaches us that humanity has always been relatedto the image: itserves sometimes to sanctify, sometimes to boast and to glorify, and sometimes for pleasure. In other words, throughout history, the image has shifted from the prayer to the glorification of the man in real life to reachthe pleasure of meditation.

This law meets the need to question the historyof the image at the Arabs to figure out its stages. It will be necessary to avoid falling into the trap of the Orientalist image which presents the Arab and the Muslim as beings who come into the world with the Hijira. It will be necessary for us to study the historyof e Arabs from the underground buried images and to analyze their relation to them as well as their very existence.Is it for the prayer, the meditation or then for the glorification of oneself? If, by evoking its iconographic history, the West refers us to the Greeks and Romans, why then Arabic art historian does not go back to the time of Hadrumetum and to the Nabatene civilization? Why do not the Arabs resortto archaeological excavations to dig up their underground buried historyin Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Oman, the Arab emirates, Qatar and Bahrain? Such archaeological researches are rare.By ensuringthat Arabs, in the same way as humanity, resortedto image for religious reasons as the Hindus, the Chinese, the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans as well as all other surrounding people, it will be necessary for us to moveto the nextchapter of the human historywhich is the monotheism. At this stage, we shall focus on texts before examining the image.

It will not be possible then to avoid pondering about the sacred texts. What is the point of view of the Qu'ran and the Bible as for this question? The Qu'ran does not explicitly forbid images, the Torah, on the contrary, firmly does. Indeed, according to the Book of Exodus (20; 4), Yahveh warns Moses against the painting and its consequences by saying: " You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth ", reminding himthe damnation which could follow. Because Yahveh is a jealous God who would not toleratethat anotherGod but him is worshiped.

In the Qu'ran, God is so much sanctified that he is imperceptible to the eye and the reason. Indeed, God in the Qu'ran is different from Yahveh who, in the Bible, is capable of visiting Abraham and asking for water to wash his feet and rest. Moreover, he will eat the roast veal at his host. In the Qu'ran, God is anabstract concept that no painter can depict in any way. This is why there was no fear fordepiction and this is why the text does not insist on this proscription. So where does this claimed ban come from? According to the Arab world image collections in the IREMAM, Marianne Baruccand asserts: " It is obvious that the Qu'ran is not interested in theimage industry or in the depiction of human beings, but it firmly forbids the idolatry " [(7)].

It confirms the thesis which we have put forward stating that the proscription had

existed for so long andhad been deliberately amplified. If the image is forbidden by the Judaism as it is stated in the Torah, the same should be in the Christianity since it is a reading of Judaism according to the Church. Indeed, the earlyreferences to Christianity forbid the image and its diffusion in chapels.This is what the recent history confirms :The Byzantine controversy is actually the dispute of clerks of the Church about the legitimacy of the use of icons within the Church. It is curious that this violent quarrel, which ledto the schism, corresponds to Oleg Grabar's deduction about the evolution of ethical view of Islam on painting.

At the end of this controversy, that emerged during the 8th century, detractors of the image referred to the text of the Book of Genesis mentioned earlier. They therefore preferred, to inscribe the initials of Christ instead of hanging his image on the walls of churches. They thus wanted to replace the image by calligraphy. It is exactly what their Arabneighbors and enemies did. But, if Christians were based onthe bible, on what did Muslims rely ? This question, formulated at this stage, is not innocent, because what would justify its coincidence with the Byzantine controversy? On the other hand, what is the point of pondering the Muslim attitude, as if there was only one?

These issues were not raised by Orientalism that keeps harping on the idea of proscription. Assuming that the image is forbidden in the Muslim world or the Islamic land, which part of the Muslim world are we talking about it? Does the Shiite Islam forbid the image ? Where should all these paintings and miniatures that fill the world's libraries, including those of the Western world, be listed ? It seems that the Shiite position is not different from that of the Catholics who have justified the use of image in the chapels. Moreover, the explicit text prohibiting the image had only appearedaround 720 AD emanating from a political, and not a religious authority. In fact, that year, before the start of the Byzantine controversy over image, Umayyad caliphate, Yazid Ibn Omar signed a decree banning the use of the image in mosques, churches and all places of worship.

It means that something wasnoticed in mosques. Not to mention the Jewish synagogues where the image is of course prohibited. It is interesting at this point to wonder if images are noticed in mosques and to which end ? Doprayers in Islam require a means of explanation for imams to use the image? And what is the point of banning the image in mosques as well as in churches? What is the connection betweenthem?

To understand this issue from the perspective of Muslim political authority we should examine the features of the image among Christians whose practice in this regard has been linked to Muslims. The used paintingstold the life of Christ and his passion. These images should awaken people's compassion to soften their hearts and fill them with terror and guilt at what man has done to who the Church calls son of God. Where is the equivalent in our religion? What is the similar event that would cause the prohibition of image in mosques?

The similar event is the disgrace of Ahl al-Bayt with the Umayyads. It is probably the most important event that the Shiites used in their propaganda against the Umayyad power and that Orientalism has neglected, knowing that the Shi'ite world has not witnessed the prohibition of image reflected in the model of the Fatimids. This event coincided, as it is known, with the compiling of hadith, which allowed to slip huge number of forged hadiths particularly baffling .

But since every cloud has a silver lining, the ban on the image in places of worship has not prevented its development as a non-religious practice. Nobody stopped producing images of the life not eventhe caliphate ,author of the ban : they only avoided depicting the religious and the sacred. Shiites have indeed continued to depict Ali and his family. They even depicted the Prophet, hiscompanions, Al-Buraq, angels, etc. This paintingof which the West boasts is therefore the land of Islam. Why then did not the Orientalists and their Arab and non-Arabs (Ajm) followers report it?

But the most important fact in addition to the ban is the tendency of Arab painter, not the Muslim theoretically, to paint the earthly life. Moreover, he establishedpainting schools that have nothing to do with what is called miniature. Indeed, one who observes the works of Yahya Al-Wasti could not miss the opportunity to speak of works of art even ifthey are documented. This idea is not mine but it comes from a specialist in Arabic painting, Ettinghausen, in his famous book "The Arab painting." So, contrary to the argument alleged by Orientalism that the Arab artist has turned to calligraphy and decoration when he encountered the ban, we note that it has taken a new pictorial orientation which will form the basis of the art of European Renaissance.

Anoverall objective reading about art and image history (in general) confirms that the Christian era, that is the periodbeginning with the Byzantine controversy till the Italian Renaissance, did not bring much because it is to the religious texts. Everything European art boasts is limited to the works realized by the great Italian artist Giotto and probably his master, Cimabue. Giotto's geniuslies, according to art historians, in the fact that it brought back the clergy, and even the Virginand the child, to their human condition. In other words, it inaugurated the realistic art and not the art inspired by the religious texts. It is exactly what the experience of Arab art has achieved as proven by the School of Baghdad, the Cham and Andalusia.Besides, bearing in mind that Al-Wasti is a contemporary of Giotto, it is impossible not to admit that his school has not influenced that of Florence andits pioneers who wanted to get rid of Byzantine paintingrules.

If we accept this, we easily admit the idea that Arabic art has contributed to the universal art in the same way as philosophy, natural sciences, chemistry, Arabic mechanics and other jobsand the knowledge. The issue is that art was not the main focus of Arab contemporarythinkers and philosophers, which made it plundered by Orientalists.

NOTES:

1- Philippe Julian, Orientalists, Book office, Fribourg, Switzerland, 1977.

2- B.S / Aignan, Renaissance of Islamic art, PEFA, Casablanca, 1954.

3- Oleg Grabar, The development of Islamic art, Flammarion, Paris, 1985, p 13.

4- V. Gonzales, The Trap of Salomon, Albin Michel, Paris, 2002, p. 12-13.

5- We say (so) it because nobody could assert that (the land of) Andalusia was under the authority of the Church before the Muslims settle down there.

6- The image in the Arab world, IREMAM-CNRS, Paris, 199.

7- Marianne Baruccand, Functionsof the image in Islamic societies.

Divergence of points of view, personal work or quest for identity

Dr.Emna Nsiri

Till our days, the Arab plastic artist did not settle a number of questions that have been mentioned since the half of the previous century, questions about the heritage (local) and the Western contemporary artistic knowledge, if the expression suits . He did not , as well, settle the question of Islamic arts, that of Islamic aesthetic structure and their continuity in the process of the future-evolution of the Arabic artistic product, the importance of this product and the interest of the Arab plastic artist accomplished works through these problems.

This is where the situation of the Arab culture does not cease offering miscellaneous distinctions and titles, orbiting around both notions of the authentic and the contemporary. As a result, these questions, as well as others, generated what may appear as a divergence of points of view, whether it is in the production of art and aesthetes criticisms or then at the level of the artistic practice of the Arab plastic artists. In fact certain artists believe in the importance of an open approach of the question, as well as a freedom of thought that is not overburdened with censorship, and even without devoted references, especially that older generations came within modernity with all its bases and its postulates. In fact during its foundation, this modernity tried to abandon the ancient positions, whatever they are... From there were born the Postmodernists currents who will be undermined , with more virulence, all theoretical and aesthetic models by qualifying them as classicism.

Moreover, the thesis of these artists is that the evolution of art is in accordance with cultural, historical, socioeconomic and religious contexts. The complexity of these systems had as an effect the convergence of cultures in the international scene. So, since the beginning of the previous century, the Islamic heritage has been adapted to worldwide artistic production and was invested in many ways so that it is difficult to consider Islamic inheritance to an autonomous whole. Also, it beggars belief to neglect the logic, that Arab art is the result of the artist's vision, of his competencies, influenced by local environment

as well as by outside, as much as his experience is a kind of continuous mobilizing dialogue such as the cultural roots of the artist and its origins which are passed on from generation to generation so that the culture of the other to which he has access, and which is an integral part of his cultural identity; especially since the Arab Academy is impregnated with Western methods (this topic was broadly discussed in Arab researches in criticism of art).

Therefore, It is currently hard to believe in a probable alienation of the artist inside both worlds: the Arab-Muslim world and the Western world, because his cultural-aesthetic formation became an admixture of many elements implying both worlds. Moreover we have seen how certain periods of the history characterized by an intellectual open and universal atmosphere allowed the synthesis. This combination was furthered by Orientalism, the curiosity for revealing the artist and the will to achieve a total revolution in the widespread traditions. This phenomenon clearly emerged during the first half of the previous century. So, the contemporary trends were multiplied and benefited from the art in China, Japan and Far East, the Muslim countries, the primitive regions, Africa and also in the West … How then would the Arabic visual artist work isolated from the widespread trends and would he refer to a unique model? Nowadays , as far as the artist is (registered in the globalization) influenced by all the events of the universal culture... and has access to all the tools and the means every artist has in the other side of the world as well as in the rapid ICT evolution and the visual media; because, new techniques were integrated in the visual art. This question concerned a number of local as well as foreign photographers and encouraged more work on the technical plan by neglecting, or nearly so, the cognitive and aesthetic choices of the artist.

In contrast, another trend has an opposite vision and associates with the aesthetics and the Islamic arts. It works on the same intellectual and artistic systems by trying to formulate a contemporary approach which rejects the dependence and encourages creativity, and by questioning the pictorial heritage inside new systems. This trend is based on both, the shape and the vision; that is it revives the Islamic aesthetic reference, which was the culmination of thought systems elaborated during successive periods, and based on the conceptions of the Muslim thinker and artist, in particular about the theory of emanation. According to this theory, which was re-examined by the Muslim philosophers, in particular Al-Kindi, Al-Fârâbî, IbnRochd (Averroes), IbnSina (Avicenna) and the Sufis so that it complies with Muslim creed, God is the origin of emanation. He is also the origin of the universe whom the future depends on, because, he is the main cause and the world is one of the evidences of his perfection. Throughout the theory of emanation, the aforementioned Muslim philosophers come up with the result that the human being, archetype of this continuity, is the central pole of both material and rational existence at the same time. They also disclosed the dispositions of emanation as well as the role of God in the life balance.

This (abstract) metaphysical vision of existence was after being developed by Ikhwan As-Safa (the Siblings of the Pure). They related it to the concept of creation and reserved it in relation between creativity and creation as well as for the diversity which plays an important role in their philosophy. After Sufis integrated several aesthetic changes relating to perfection, diversity as well as the multiplicity of beings, uniqueness of essence, richness of the pictures in the universe and many other ideas.

Also, the Islamic aesthetics were based on an inherent condition connecting the perfection and the beauty and determining their respective natures. The first one is, indeed, of the order of the absolute and the second conditioned by the material -the perceptible, but can be sublimated in the divine. The perfection was also declined in intellectual, spiritual, axiological, sociological and artistic. For the Sufis, the artistic perfection is associated with the act of creation accomplished by the man, that is with the imitation, the imagination and the detachment from the world of senses. It is also in reference to the aesthetic influence on the audience of the artistic work. Furthermore, the perfection generates relief and happiness.

In the same prospect , they believe in the necessary relation between art and virtue. They were also interested in the concepts of divine beauty and majesty.

For that reason the theory of the relative beauty of beings and of Man was spread. Subsequently, it is important to be attentive to the latent beauty (the essential) , more than to the obvious beauty (the perceptible).

So, the Islamic aesthetic thought which was formulated from diverse philosophic sources, reveals the strong presence of the doctrinal contents, in particular as regards the uniqueness of the existence, which symbolically switched to the visual artistic image. Therefore, these aesthetics materialized in several values and artistic concepts such as the abstraction, the symbolization, the harmony, the refinement, the purity and the grace.

In this regard , artists and Arabic art critics, in this case , Afif Al Bahnassi and Samir Assayegh, point that the nature of the Islamic arts imposed that the "Self" of the artist is reduced in the collective presence for the benefit of the work of art considered as an evidence of the creativity of the creator, as well as a sign of recognition of the demonstration of the beautiful in the absolute in certain aspects of the material existence. Because, as it is the case in the Sufi ways (tariqa), the artistic practice is based on love and the self-abnegation, given that the experience of creation is an impulse towards the Beautiful (God), a praise and an evidence of its kingdom. So, the artist fades for the sake of art.

Personal experiences or collective performance?

In a TV talk show , the artist and the art critic Samir Essayegh notice that it is difficult to reduce the contemporary aesthetic and artistic theories to the Western aesthetic

system; because, it is necessary to admit the existence of an Oriental theory of the art which translates the various relationships of the Oriental artist, and probably the Muslim artist in particular, with its internal and outside world. Subsequently, there must be, on this region of the globe, the artistic expressions which distinguish it.

This idea, as well as the others, is perceived by Samir Essayegh in the same way as much in its theoretical works as in its artistic practice. Besides, he takes the grapheme for basic element, on which the composition of his paintings is based, inside spaces which seem to decompose them to move under a synthetic aspect so that they (spaces) take back their shape and their balance inside the work surface. Indeed, the calligraphies of this artist are formed by the harmony of the geometrical spaces and the graphical flow besides the chromatic touch from a surface to another, and from which emanate the dynamism and the vivacity of the works.

Despite having used the calligraphy, this pictorial language is not close to that of Dhia Azzaoui this other visual artist who, for quite a long time , devoted, in an organic unity, the beauty of the grapheme by its movements implying the human life as well as shadows followed by colors and some ornamental motives mixed with the grapheme. This language which the artist Azzaoui was able to build with skill and theoretical consciousness also holds to its thoroughly readings of the heritage, the philosophy, the history and the Arab-Muslim literature, this language thus enriched the professional Arab and was elevated to the status of an implicit norm in the consciousness and the experiences of several Iraqi visual artists, in particular his disciples. However, this influence was not transformed into a motive of creation in the other artists so that the experience is mature and that it allows to invent, through it, a style which includes miscellaneous occupations having common aesthetic and artistic bases. Still in the embryonic stage, this period, that of Dhia Azzaoui, was exceeded by the majority of the successive artists to produce the other systems which lost their relationship with the visual elements characterizing the Islamic art and with its own cognitive vision . It was the same in the works of Nja Mahdaoui which are faithful to the graphemes and characterized by the rigor of the constructions, the technical austerity for which the pictorial diaeresis and the professionalism in the production of the image which is based on the shape and the size of the characters. What draws attention, is that although these works managed well to anchor clear demonstrations of the practice of the artist in their coherent evolution, they remain within the competence of the personal treatment which was limited to the works of the artist himself .

Maybe that the experience of the Iraqi visual artist Chaker Hassan Al Saïd constitutes an excellent demonstration of this work at the same time judicious and tiring in the attempt to artistically reveal the potentialities of the Islamic art and vision and to exploit them in the contemporary and the new.

Chaker Hassan did not limit himself, indeed, to the review of the philosophical heritage whether it is the aesthetics or the religious text; he rather made a theoretical synthesis of his understanding and his consciousness of religion and the aesthetics leaning on his own personal skills as well as on his deep knowledge of the religious and Sufi thought.

By closely examining his developments, we note the main themes which we thought illustrated in the visual experiment (performance). He leans on Sufi readings of the language, figures and letters there, besides what he considers a semiotic , in an attempt to collect the signals (signs?) produced by the organization of figures and then letters, as well as other dismissals in relation with his representation of the existence, the creation, the unveiling (tajalli) and the secret, of the hereafter, as well as of the knowable and the intuitive and other concepts of Islamic philosophical and religious thought. Among his calligraphies, entitled "Alwifq" and that is a kind of analytical visual projection conceived to explain issues about the evolution of the language and its symbolism as much as this one consists of signs with the signified, forming on one hand an aesthetic discourse which is visual and functional constituting a spatio-temporal dialogue, and, on the other hand, a plan of expressions loaded with significant immanent-metaphysics.

In fact, he delegates to graphemes to express what is obvious and what is latent by means of an absolute metaphysical understanding, considering as well that the human cognition in its Islamic cultural context evolved through these symbolic constructions. So, cross references and material significations at rational and intuitive levels, it does not cease having recourse to a comparable style in the deconstructivism and structural approach to illustrate its positions and reach , through these visual links, and plans with closely linked concepts to its dogma as well as to his Sufi's company, such as abundance, loneliness, fusion, eternity ... Concepts he will apply every time to the one absolute independent from everything.

For Chaker Hassan, the work of art is an alternation between space and time, and the artistic experience has to be reduced to an audience, a work of art and an artist. From this point of view, it is the expression of three periods, to know the past, the present and the future, allowing to depict the relation between the self and the other. Moreover, whatever plastic content is, it contains the conditions of its spirituality. The artist adopts these notions and many others when he sails in the areas of the metaphysical with his Islamic determinants besides his Sufi tendency. Nevertheless, as we can note it, the artist also inserts into his theoretical standpoint a part of his conscience of history, mythology, philosophies and Western and Oriental aesthetics which are reduced at the level of their analyses in his doctrinal and Sufi conscience, so often, he tries to relate it with his tribe references (religious). The same applies to his description of its abstractions. In fact, in

his two experiences « the Sidewalks» and« the Walls» , expressing the idea of his work on a real material space, he maintains that he depicted it as an essence which opposes to the self, making this surface a topic of visual and philosophical dialogue.

In fact, he sees in «the sidewalks» a depiction of prostration as well as what he calls the fatalism of the human dimension and meticulously depicts the inclines as well as the directions of the streets in this space. He also restores the color to objects, represents the art museum where in one of its parts lie the lines as well as the curves of the dilapidated sidewalks. How, then, does he reproduce the daily scenes? He asserts: « I shall see it with his own eyes. For me , It is no longer the place that I trample on when I held my head high in my prayer, except under its aspect of an endless dune on the road leading to the Saddam-Place Center of the Museum where it will be reduced to the asphalted stones. Yes, over there on the dunes of power where on their border, I would have enjoyed this severe loneliness which is part of the prayer ritual in its physical and spiritual dimension at the same time ». There, he will experience the place with its fetal posture, as if the place was the afterbirth .

At the crossing points of the part and of anything born in him as a momentum towards the absolute. "O barren land, O droughty sands - he carries on- tell your eagerness to get your debris as if it was meteors coming back in the womb, or a sentinelled drowsy sun at the threshold of its cellar, embarking on the morning while an awaken generous soul is seeking itself, that in their (re) calls, the pavements explained to me the meaning of my prostration . "

Thus it appears clearly how the artist moves from the exploitation of the Sufi religious and aesthetic values to the Sufi contemplation, properly speaking, of the outside world and the entire existence leading to the Sufi symbolization of any visual (pictorial) element. Instead of visualizing the idea and transforming it into creation, He moved to the picture to clarify the idea from a systematic perspective which limits its freedom of creation as well as the invested elements which often become simple features and (analytical) colored surfaces. But, according to him , the paradox lies in his comprehension of the syntax of the picture. In fact, for him, the world is an objective work independently of the choice of the artist and becomes the result of hazards on one hand, and the vision of the artist on the other one. It also stresses the role of a linguist non point in reconciliation between the real world and the artistic world in itself; it is as though it was about a text that can be read.

That goes back to the plastic treatment which Chaker Hassan implemented in lots of his experiences. In fact, he resumed topics already treated by contemporary artists belonging to the modernity in its different spheres of influence. It is about themes in relation with the trace, the life and the material such as the depiction of the perceptible in

which he brings his personal explanation emanating from its own mental representations. Nevertheless, for the form, he chose pure abstractions where there is a very professional and unprompted use of colors. Throughout certain stages of his experience, he added to the surface of the paintings striations conceived from his cognitive presentations and also had recourse to the Arabic calligraphy which is a clear expression of Sufi passion which motivated this artist. Through his choices, he wanted to refer to language symbolism and to immanent meanings in graphemes. However, the spontaneity of language as well as the artful stenography in texts neither , sometimes, prevent certain monotony nor reduced the distance separating the richness of point of view and its fantasies of the pictorial stereotypes.

Besides, the audience cannot disclose , in calligraphies , the cognitive and the philosophical theses in spite of their closeness to the atmosphere that the artist wanted to convey. Because, on the same basis as abstraction and modern works, paintings allow multiple readings. Nevertheless, they support no metaphysical Sufi Islamic hypothesis. Except for the letters which occupy with stability the center of the pictorial construction, any other sign of the elaboration of a clear model of expression remains absent, so it is allowed to us to maintain that, if they abolished or erased Arabic grapheme, the canvas would mime perfectly any assiduous abstract works accomplished by an Arabic painter.

Certainly, the model of Chaker Hassan Al Saïd as well as the other models characterized by the intellectual research– aesthetics -of Islamic craftsmanship enhance the contemporary Arab performance founded on the appeal to various choices at the same time aesthetic, artistic and theoretical. However, it was asserted, nonetheless, as a personal work having its own peculiarities without constituting a true orientation in Arabic plastic arts. Till now, it does not represent neither a style which expresses culture and collective creation and which could be classified as one of the movements of modern artistic production.

The use of the Arabic grapheme either in the calligraphy of its multiple or decorative models , is frequent in the typical Arabic calligraphic paintings , or in contexts bearing various artistic references where the Arabic letter in one of the parts of the painting. Though all that has its own cultural contribution as well as its own signification, he did not produce what they could consider “innovative” plastic expression of Islamic pictorial heritage. We will get back to offer some explanation of the phenomenon. However, we would like to stop on an idiosyncratic curious experience which benefited from the Arabic environment as well as characteristics of Islamic art in elaboration with its own pictorial system. Did this experience mark the artistic changes of its epoch?

We refer to the artist Paul Klee who tried, in his abstractions, to represent the picture of the being through a very different conception founded on the recognition of material,

its external aspects as well as its spiritual and abstract depth. Klee exploited, also, the references of Islamic arts and their aesthetics. At the same time, he gave free reign to his imagination as well as to the unconscious scrolling of pictures. It is possible to say that in his artistic and intellectual creation, he relied on two fundamental dimensions of inalienable creed:

- The first is based on the uniqueness of the world as a permanent landscape, or better the indiscernible continuity of the elements of existence, which leads it to reap its own garden where converge the vegetable and the animal, the mineral and the liquid while merging with heavenly stars and planets. Truly, Klee tried to create a hostile landscape of the world, a landscape worthy of its history.

- The second consists in the necessity to define laws, which are for him the starting point of creation. That's why by observing the leaf of a tree, Klee searches the essence by dissecting its structure, or to be more specific the essence of any vegetable, the law of circulation of liquid in the fibers and veins of this leaf, from that he understands the link between the form and the function.

We can notice the diversity of resources intervening in the vision of the artist, to know Chinese philosophy, intuitive philosophy, Western scientific philosophy to which is added his knowledge of the modern aesthetics. For this reason his study of form did not only rely on its pictorial competencies and its skills, but rather on all these resources. In addition, he was no more interested in form than in birth, the genesis and way forms are born, or better nature of very creation, which is equivalent for him to the concept of creation. There was a lot of amalgam, irrationality and non-sciencifity in some of the theoretical proposals. Nevertheless, they were in perfect agreement with its creative pictorial research in the elaboration of his style. In fact, his tendency to innovation as well as to deepening of pictorial essays through theoretical vision came true through a liberated and creative mentality, what sometimes made him fall in amalgam. Also, his openness to the Islamic aesthetic values and in the artistic production which emanated from his fascination by Islamic environment flooded with light was transformed into progressive experience which revives the elements. Moreover, he pictured it with the same bright mentality free from any taboos. Perhaps his interest in subjects such as movement, change, light and the rhythm was of a certain competition, knowing that the fact of focusing his attention on movement probably allowed him to ameliorate his experience and his pictorial discoveries, given that for him everything depends on it .In fact, he starts with the most insignificant details such as the dynamic point from which stem all creations, all images as well as all states. This principle was a research topic in aesthetics and Islamic arts and which made all Muslim artists interested in the Sufi perspective. Nevertheless, the mutation which Paul Klee operated in the presentation of

this concept was great , and also in the Arabic environment and Islamic heritage influence he was subjected to; because, he succeeded in making of his consciousness , his reading and his intellectual analyses a real foundation in the act of creation. We think, in this respect, that what made the Islamic art , as one of the resources in the experience of Paul Klee , become productive and efficient and which was not characterized by stability and prudence that we see in other Arabic artists' experiences.

The same remark applies for other enthusiasts of the heritage of Muslim civilization, particularly Mondrian, Matisse and Kandinsky.

These artists and others succeeded in exploiting abstraction, movement and ornament which Islamic arts used to produce abstract art.

So, from there , shall we be able to begin disclosing certain obstacles which prevent the Arab plastic artist from setting himself free when he works on Islamic pictorial heritage. In fact, we often notice that the Arabic plastic artists lock themselves in the aesthetic and artistic Islamic values by neglecting other aspects of knowledge. Besides, some of them forget that Islamic arts are singled out thanks to their openness to different arts and cultures of their era.

It makes no doubt, that to stick to one single reference while neglecting the rest deprives the artist from hypotheses and more opened visions, because aesthetic and artistic progress, let us repeat it, will depend on the blossoming of exchange and on the openness of a culture to another one with a new mentality. In fact, the picture of art will neither change nor be rooted through an attitude of consumption in regard to the culture of the other; it will be only importing movements and appropriating them without serious research. It will not even benefit from its Islamic heritage, if it locks itself. In other words, the issue can be solved by the openness to other cultures and their deepened knowledge, on the one hand and by the thorough study of Islamic heritage on the other hand.

The Japanese graphic constitutes a model which conducted a successful approach: this miscellaneous production with its peculiarities did not have recourse to the Japanese letters to assert an artistic identity, notwithstanding the beauty of the Japanese language and its visual richness which inspired their classical paintings. However, the modifications which Japanese operated on the language of the graphic incarnate their serious reflections on the essence of the Japanese culture and art, to such an extent that the picture is transformed as a sign of belonging and so that they are singled out in every worldwide exhibition room.

We really need this serious research, not only in the world of Arabic plastic art, but also in the Arabic cultural system in general, given that knowledge and contemporary art are consequently linked to personal artistic practice.

« In fact, in the pioneer work it always starts by a cognition, cognitive links, a pictorial paradox and not a treatment, an experimentation and methods of artistic production profoundly linked to the ideology, or better to beliefs, to ideas, to forms and to the previous solutions. This is what we disclose from the comparison of the pictorial product and the cultural foundation on which it is based ».

Besides, it is a different issue. In fact, the Arabic artists who try to develop Islamic arts probably freed themselves from the hold of the political ideologies; nevertheless freedom is absent in the works of many of them, reveals that heritage became an ideology which manipulates them and dominates their works.

On the other hand, most of these performances are characterized by prudence, as for the deconstruction such as the destruction of Islamic pictorial stereotypes and their reconstruction inside new relations. Perhaps it is so because the artist still preserves the thread linking up the doctrinal with the artists in the patrimonial models. In fact, it happens that, on the one hand, the pictorial values are adopted as cognitive value having allusions, and announcing his Sufism on the other, because it constitutes a summary of symbols for the contemporary artist having doctrinal presuppositions. For this reason, a feeling of an artistic audacity is born in the artist that would constitute a breach of the religious philosophy of the same art, creating between the artist and his perfections, or between him and his associates, a conflict between the aesthetics which mingles with the doctrinal concept, on the one hand, and the aesthetics and the tendency to free itself from any tribal discourse. Because, Islamic creation was often considered in relation with the metaphysics.

Going back to the end of this presentation of the actual landscape where art has known a lot of failures and crises resulting from various factors, of which particularly resulted the hold of the law of the market on the movement of creation, with more power than before. Moreover, with the appearance and the quick evolution of globalization with its advantages and dangers, there is in the international compilation of plastic arts a big consumption and a technical jargon which pervaded these environments, to which a virtual dynamic is added, revived mainly by the market activities, and many other problems in relation to the technology of art and the explosion of the concept of artistic creation.

In all this, art remains a means of discovery and intuitive opinion poll about the future as well as a form of unforeseen enchantment. Let us focus then, on all that is peculiar and human, and let us dedicate the visionary projects where depth is born of the diversity of cognitive and technical references!

Narrowing the ray of hope and the refractory tendency

Difference of points of view: personal work or quest for identity?

Ismail Abdallah

Synthesis

For the warrior the fire is a weapon, whereas for the craftsman it is an equipment and a means. As for the priest, it's a God's sign, while it is a mystery for the layman . However, according to these representations of the fire, without exception, the scientific aspect of the consciousness is a typical feature of natural elements. Besides, history does not represent the fire in this respect, but sees it in the battle of Carthage [*], in Jan Hus's inquisition [**] and Jordano Bruno [***]

The creation as the vision:

It is possible to assert that the creation in its perceptive aspect is a vision and, as an effective activity, an initiative. Whatever is the perspective its essence is innovation. As a result, it becomes possible to assert that the creation is at the same time, a vision, an initiative and an innovation. This is the common meaning. But, the implicit meaning of the artistic creation is particularly the penetrating understanding. The concept of vision leads to an important result : the creation is always a personal work, that is inevitably a human creation. Nevertheless, it is not always about a singular person. Indeed, in the sphere of social creation in particular, such as the philosophical, political creation , religious or other . It is similar to the public personality, in other words , who does not express himself in his own name, but rather translates the spirit of his home group; or better, as if, in other moments, he reacted in an almost inevitable way to the needs for the situational dynamics in which he is involved.

Actually, creation leads to a new reality. Because, it involves the artist, on one side, and the audience, on the other, in a new world which is not the one we are used to. In this perspective, (the vision of) the artist transcends the reality, forges ahead and

distances himself from the ordinary. Besides, the principle of progression of the artistic experience is a serene interaction which has its own specificities and which comes true in the conscious experience . Besides, it has to come along with acts and generates extremely fine tools in consonance with what requires the refinement of the artistic experience.

Besides, as an aspect of consciousness, the thought reflects the underlying system at the moments and in the components of the isolated experience. There are, also, certain primary models of similarities and continuities, included in minds which were not refined during their contact with the world. The model's structure differs in accordance with the artist's subtlety, his instruction, the cultural heritage as well as the capacity of his reasoning for identifying the environment and adapting himself to it.

Besides this cognitive attitude can be strengthened, by an aesthetic and emotional arrangement adapted to this situation. So it is possible for him to formulate his ideas in the form of hypotheses which he subjects for examination of logical and experimental tools and which he classifies as design models. This aesthetic and emotional arrangement assures the continuity of the reaction the sensitive elements and the situations. It also directs the artist's creativity towards the clarification of the quintessence of situations and objects in their fertility and their peculiarity.

The basic point on which underlies the quintessence of objects is a subjective detail from which the components of the creation emanate. From this point of view, the success of the artist as well as the qualities of sincerity, faithfulness, greatness, depth and brightness characterizing his work, become dependent on the degree of care, skill and professionalism allowing the exposure of the real essence of objects.

Therefore, reaction, knowledge and aesthetic vision constitute a mixture which can be perceived in a global way by the artist. Nevertheless, the details that hold the situations and the objects, such the external appearance, their substance, the states of mind which drive them, the alerts and the promises which they suggest cannot be expressed from the same perspective. In this respect , the different expressions from the human sculpture adopted by Michel Ange, Bernini, Mayol, Rodin and Epstein represent the particular vision of each of these artists, as far as it reveals their feelings, orientations, whims and hopes, by moving from what is excessively marginal to what is deeper and more long-lasting. Besides, it is possible to determine the particular vision of the artist only from the expression which he suggests of this vision.

Besides, the peculiarity which determines the artistic expression lies in the impulse encouraging the discovery of the real nature of objects, situations and facts as well as the will to convey it . Also, the starting point of the artist is difficult to express. It is indeed of an intuitive nature. But, it can also be revealed from this intuition, it seems that it consists of a set composed of clairvoyance, exaltation and intention; because it is in this set that the

artist›s vision comes true, his capacity to guess what has not been yet realized. This flash of inspiration amazes him and makes him suffer at the same time, that›s why he makes every effort to clarify it , fix it and assert it. This effort appears in the discovery of the context , that has allowed the initial design . In this respect, the artist observes what can be grasped as a synthesis and tries to analyze its constituents. In fact he finds, sensorial and cognitive aspects such colors, voices, fabrics, rhythms, stereotypes, gestations, virtual plannings, feelings, emotions as well as tension and conflict there which is inherent to it, intentions, ideas, meanings, obstacles, links and reverie.

When the artist begins destroying his painting and tearing up his drawings and when he notices that his experience has only led to make opaque questions for which the answer is not known, he finds himself compelled to cheat with objects. And by resuming the experience , it is as if he decided to go at the bottom of objects. (There are no moments when the experience reaches the accomplishment ; because, when the experience is satisfied or when it is interrupted, it is not finished, since what is looked for remains unique) . Besides, in an experience, the most subtle realizations are not shielded from a temporary stopping.

In this experimental effort, ideas, images and feelings exchange support, lighting and invention, so that none of these elements is isolated. So, the experience becomes a process where the fusion, the refinement and the rectification of the images and the ideas progressively take place , thanks to what one of the elements confers to the others. Indeed, they do not represent fragments of which the experience consists, but rather repeated junctures.

Between arrangement and identity

There is no doubt (the humanity) is formed around human groups different from each other, so that it is possible to classify them in different types. Furthermore, all the racial criteria which this type of categorization mobilizes, is relevant to varying degrees in one and the same race. Indeed, the individuals of the same ethnic group distinguish themselves from each other significantly. As a result, some of them are closer to individuals of a different race. In this respect, the available indications show that the same mental characteristics are variably distributed in between the main ethnic groups.

All races contributed to the creation of civilization so that it was passed on from an ethnic group to another during history. Indeed, while civilizations prospered in Western and Oriental Asia, the most refined ancestors of ethnic groups were not currently more advanced than the prehistoric man as he exists at present in the isolated regions of any civilization. Besides, if the relationship between race and culture drew the attention of several researchers, few of them approached it with neutrality and recoil .

The identity has a double origin, a human nature having potentials and generic possibility and socio-historical context determining what is reached of these potentials and their means as well as the orientation they take. That's why, it is an illusion to explain the identity by reducing it to one of the terms of this couple. However, it is doubtless that only human nature of which we are conscious is determined by the various needs for the life, which mutate and is straightened according to them and which is, from this point of view, a flexible, docile nature which is reproduced in any time and any place.

The culture of people, besides, does not convey an innate national identity or a deeply-entrenched national root, but rather an appropriate history made by cultural and historical experiences . Indeed the unlimited exogenous factors which influence this identity make, of any return for an essence of this type, an intellectual aberration.

The human being is an ambiguous question which leads the faith and the scientist to a serious mistake, as soon as they grant it interest. Because, instead of reaching what is universal (what is completely outside the potential of the conscious , we notice that the movement of the body perceived in the visual field as well as the abstract device of the chain of mechanical causality deduced from it can be subjected to the analysis. However, the real life is reproduced and cannot be recognized. Besides, the truth is timeless, while life, unlike the latter , is something which exists beyond the causes, the motivations and the truths. As a result, the distinction made between faith and knowledge, or between fear and curiosity, or still between the inspiration and the criticism is not after all definitive . In fact, the knowledge, is chronologically nothing but a late form of faith, the faith in life, the love arising from the mysterious fear of the world, causes and fates. We do not make a distinction here between people according to their ways of thinking, nor according to their concerns. We differentiate them according to who they are (thinkers) or (participants).

In every civilization there is an acute sense of belonging , of one man or another to a given culture . The classic idea of the Berber as well as the idea the Arabs have, of the impious , are similar ideas whatever is the underlined difference. In this perspective, if the culture is historically determined and time-limited, the same applies for images and symbols which impelled the human imagination.

So, the capacity to adapt metaphors and to post them on the international social networks is a different matter from the guarantee for these photos to keep their power to inspire groups separated by peculiar history and a culture reflecting the experience of different social groups, whether they are classes, religious, communions or ethnic groups. Besides, the meaning of the most universal metaphors for a given group is deduced from the experiences and from the socio-historic context, within which such a group as well as his authors' intentions, evolve. In other words, the metaphors and the cultural heritage convey identities which the historic conditions forged during periods of the history. In

this context, the concept of identity is not used to describe a common characteristic to the lifestyles and the activities, but to the subjective feelings , that a given group, sharing an experience and common characteristics, felt. These values and these feelings are due to three elements of their common experience:

1- A sense of continuity between the experiences of the successive generations for the unity of the human race.

2- Common memories of facts and personalities who establish a point of transition of a collective history.

3- The sense , of a group having in common these experiences, to share the same future.

Therefore, the sense of collective cultural identity lies in the sense of continuity, in the common memories as well as in the sense of sharing the future binding the members of a social group, which have common experiences and cultural peculiarities.

The cultural identity

The identity of a being refers to his essence, to all which distinguishes him of another one and confers him a different constitution. The definition , in its simplicity, summons a set of theoretical relations which clarify the concept of identity. Theoretically speaking, the identity is present and absent at the same time, it is contextual and changes according to the situation. Furthermore, the relationship between identity and the context, establishes another relation between the identity and the self-awareness, because the individual can only recognize his identity in front of the other, the one who has a different identity.

This opens the identity up to a theoretical eventuality and a real possibility, or better to an existence both by force and by action . Nevertheless, it does not mean that the identity is an assumed and a predestined fact: it means that some of its elements are scattered in the stable and harmonious period and it requires a threatening and unstable context to emerge in every member, without that this context of instability leads to the assertion of the identity and its fulfillment.

The identity between memory and history

In the organic groups, as it is the case of the large family, the coherent village and the siblings, the collective memory transcend the recollection of past. It is about the current world of the group through which the roles are distributed, the world of convention, the tradition and the strategy of a pre-established life. In this case, the historic memory is a

current practice, therefore, it prevents the social fragmentation ; that is, it prevents the individual from getting rid of emotional links. Besides, it prevents, the individualization, the assertion of the personality and the status in which its individual memory plays a fundamental role.

The emotional link protects the man from the fragmentation and prevents its oddity. It does not counterbalance the fragmentation but prevents it. And, the neutralization of the fragmentation goes through the birth of a free individual who is the focus and the subject of social relationships. Besides, in the absence of individual memory , the history could not be written and there would be no need to write it, because what distinguishes history, is this attempt to reinvent a collective memory split in individual memory.

Once the contract of groups is broken up, the memory becomes ideology: it assures an ideological function independently of its truthfulness. Therefore it is about a sectarian, national or partisan memory. It tries to assert itself as an idealized history of the group from an assumed benchmark. It consists in restructuring the group that modernity , whether external or local, has divided and annihilated.

Besides, the history is the main intellectual tool allowing to reinvent the group as a universal society where the individuals are not united by strong kinship ties, but by a diverse exchange. Besides, if the history contributes to the creation of a gathering, a society, a nation, it is unable to create the group.

In such cases, the collective memory is a nationalist ideology where the exploits of the heroes and tragedies of the past fill the heart of individuals› memory. In fact, the past becomes, common as something that we teach in schools; that is it is talked about as a text and not as a ritual. It is possible that the rituals derive from the texts that help explain the rituals.

The present writes the past as a history which fundamentally leads to it. Besides, considering the past as a history exceeds the fact of breaking its circular movement and changing it to an ascending movement so that the past becomes a simple history of the present and so that the collective memory becomes a national museum and a textbook of history. However, it is the history which does not take into account the existing organic groups. Besides, the modern national state does not tend to write its history as stories of tribes in conflict, but as a national history.

The history of the nation is written as if the nation existed as such. Besides, the national memory seems to postulate the existence of the nation, while in reality, it pursues a political objective consisting in the unification of the nation and the realization of its political sovereignty. The national memory contributes to this unification: It participates to forge the nation by postulating its existence. Besides the nation, is a spiritual community the existence of which is dependent on the memory and the collective amnesia as well as

the political objective.

After the nation is established and the spiritual community trying to set up the sovereignty takes form through institutions, different and independent from individuals and their desires, the memory begins to narrow and the need for memorial places becomes more felt : historic monuments, battlefields. The museum as an instruction of the memory is an attempt to restore the relation with the nation, as if it was about a relationship with bare concrete material objects, especially after the relationship became abstract, after the memory was not any more a ritual practice and after it is updated in the form of a conscious ritual practice switching from the state of a ritual practice into a practiced ritual. Memorial places are an expression of the loss of collective memory as active and daily updated memory, as well as a sign of the fact that this memory is besieged and haunted by the history. Therefore, the memory is reified in the space and reproduced as a ritual.

The tribal memory is displayed through the parties and the bereavements , does not require neither monuments nor museums and other memory processes. Besides, sanctuaries and relics of the saints built in more than a village are not a place of memory conservation, but places of sanctification and purification practices. The memory is an alive reality, while the history is an attempt to preserve it through the representation of the past in the present. It is thus sacred and absolute whereas the history is relative and secular. Also, it becomes attached to sensitive and tangible things, in places, images, themes, while the history is recognized through the flow of time and the relation of objects. And when it happens that the history confirms dates and places of reactivation and evocation of the memory, it is only because it admits the inconstancy of time, it makes the horrible observation that its movement is not circular and that it runs towards the disappearance which takes everything. If the memory remains in the fixity of places, the history tries to fix something in the instability of time.

The vision as the quest for identity

The vision is not only a quest for identity or search for some of its outlines. If the vision is influenced by the identity, it influences it in his turn in some way who can assert it, root it or straighten it by expressing it. Besides, the vision of the artist is a new approach to what is usual. This clairvoyance is motivated by the fruit of its artistic experience during its next contact with the situations and things as well as circumstances defining the outlines of the identity.

In the act of creation, the artist's vision is brought to assert itself thanks to its interaction with the identity. Therefore, both shine more and more. Besides, the artist can accomplish a real feat which reveals the truth of objects. Indeed, by looking at a work of

art that is, for example, Van Gogh's painting depicting a pair of shoes), we notice that this work is at the most a (product) or (an industrial object); however, whereas a commercial product hides the job which is behind, given that its reason for being is reduced to its usefulness, the act of creation remains perceptible in the object, as if the reason for being of the work of art was reduced to its aesthetic value. We know, besides, that as far as the commercial product is easy to use, as it does not draw the attention so much to the extent that, in our everyday life, we use many tools, without thinking of it or granting it any interest. As for the work of art, it attracts us as an aesthetic object or as a fulfilled fact. As a result, we perceive a presence of the art, which we contemplate for itself and which we judge without taking into account its usefulness or the profit it generates. Consequently, the work of art is not a simple industrial product which we appreciate according to the adaptation of its image with its subject , but as a blossoming pounding being as it is a creation.

From the importance of the heritage to the problem of the continuity

When the artist is inspired by the heritage, he tries to reveal the noble human values which he holds. The importance of the heritage with its traditional standards lie in the fact that it assists the artist to be inspired by it with full knowledge of the facts, and thus to assure the required continuity. It is about a fundamental condition to forge a deeper concept of change. The separation made between the heritage and the evolution towards the modern leads to an excess in the integration of elements of the heritage in the concept of past civilization, diegetic and popular past.

Therefore, the continuity takes different forms, from which are born dichotomies in the modes of expression of a single art, so that, in their first appearances, the early arts remain closely linked to their resources, to the nature of their composition, their objectives and their limits functionally and artistically recognized. With the emergence of a new type which is characterized by the dynamism and the adaptation to the movement of the cultural variation and the civilizational forms, it formed visions having different standards which have become more attached to the cyclic regularity of the socio-historic course, to the conception of the state, its systems and its general requirements. Therefore, in general, the evolution is an adaptation to the continuous variations which takes place through the exchange and not by means of the acclimatization, or better, through the general influence and not by means of the fusion.

(2) Places of the identity: the ground or the consciousness?

"If this be Islam, do we not all live in Islam?" (Goethe on 1749-1832)

The Arab abstract art remains the trend which conveys most the philosophy of the

Arab-Muslim art. It is also more expressive than certain movements of the abstract art (in West) as the abstraction of Paul Klee, Bisset, Manusset and Hoover , because they are based on a rooted cultural motivation; while certain experiences of the abstraction in the Arab world are based on the imitation of the nihilist movement of the abstract art in the West, far from the meaning of any objective and any responsibility.

The Arab presence in the West did not limit itself to the influence which life characteristics of the Arabs had on certain artists in the 20th century, or in the conception and in the forms of the Arab art: studies carried out by certain Orientalists on archaeologists, historians and art philosophers were very numerous. These studies were all collected during the 20th century, so that not a year goes by without the appearance of more than a study or a book on the ancient art in the Arab world, whether it is pre-or post-Islamic.

However, it is necessary to clarify the essential idea that these historians and archaeologists distinguished two art eras in the Arab world: a pre-Islamic era which they called Mesopotamian or ancient Syriac Art, or Phoenician art or still Punic art, and a post-Islamic era called Muslim art, without making a distinction between the civilizations which emerged in Islamic land, whose civilizations are tied to different nationalities, namely Arabs, Persians or Turks.

Also, several researchers made the link between the genesis of the Arab art after the Islam and the very widespread and prosperous Christian arts before Islam . Besides they considered , these arts as the fundamental origin of the Arab-Muslim art without showing their continuity, civilization principle in the evaluation of artistic change. The first Islamic art, in fact, was invented by the same Arab artists who lived under the religion which preceded their works and their art. So, the spreading of the Christian art in the Arab world did not prevent it from continuing to use Romain art techniques whose the best achievements were built in Alexandria, Baalbek, Jaresh and Palmyra.

Besides, the hands which built palaces in the countrysides in the East, the Al-Aqsa mosque, the big Omeyad mosque in Damascus cannot forget the traditions in which they evolved in the pre-Islamic era and which have created wonders the vestiges of which are still standing.

Resumption of the heritage with a new vision, " between rupture and continuity"

A number of innovative Arab artists remained faithful to their authenticity and their heritage. Therefore, they have taken sides with the Arabic calligraphy, recognizing in a tacit way that any dispensation this authenticity would make lose its majesty and its profound spirituality. Their works get inspired from the former resources and renew them. And if they ever deviated from resources, it is to match them with other types of

characters that merge and who are connected with invented graphic forms which lessen the rupture and pave the way for a harmony of the various elements. It takes place in compositions which find their dynamism in the way and the direction of the reading of the text to accentuate the immanent movement in the graphemes and in the general composition, or then in an attempt to exploit similar combinatorial rhythms to create pictorial melodies where silent space alternate or filled with fine charms.

The investment of the influence which the calligraphy had on the Arab architecture, the brass , the utensils, the woodwork, the glass -making and the textile in their paintings gave them new specificities. In fact, they liberated what the nature of every material previously imposed on the calligraphy and gave it some specificity in a different model free from the trace of the fabric, or the curvature of the utensil or still the reflection of the glass as well as all which surround it with shadows, depths and symmetric dimensions in accordance with the effect that each of them had on colors capacity to impose these distances inside the painting and to go beyond their appearance.

Besides, in their experiences , certain Arab artists favored the research in the local heritage of their country. In their works as well as in examples of the ambient folklore, Yemenite artists tend, indeed, to invest the characters and the Himyarite inscriptions .In Jordan, artists tend to marry the Arabic calligraphy and Nabataeans. Besides, this trend had numerous followers whose objective is to strengthen the consciousness of the links between between the various historic functions which tried to fix new specificities finding their origin in this fusion between the Arab character and the local symbol emanating from the peculiarities of the history5.

The Arab-Muslim heritage overflows with images, symbols, forms and aesthetic references. Besides, for more than a century, the Arab artists have accumulated a production of plastic arts of which the Arab intellectual should take care and which he should question and integrate into the context of the Arab cultural action. Therefore, the Arab thought is vested with a fundamental mission consisting in accompanying the evolution of the Arab sensitivity and the degree of capacity which it reached in the grasp and the integration of the aesthetic expressions of modernity.

Moreover, any research in the world of the plastic arts is, somehow, an investigation in the frame of modern artistic and aesthetic creation. Certainly, every people has a symbolic and an artistic heritage where it is possible to find specific pictorial expressions, but the plastic arts, all kinds included , belongs to the intellectual and aesthetic modernity. Therefore, the study of the Arabic plastic arts in the perspective of the cultural and artistic change presumes that we confront these arts with the issue of modernity, whether by grasping it as a Western phenomenon or then by considering it as the expression of an initial creativity (authentic?) from the Machrek to the Maghreb, the list of the artists

being inspired by the Arab calligraphy reaches tens. Each one of them has his trend to accentuate its peculiarity in the subject by different ways which he will not delay revising . So that it becomes difficult to spot these variations and evaluate them, given their fleeting character.

The Iraqi artist Dhia Azzaoui ‘s experience with the calligraphy focuses on the main potentials of the Arab character. He indeed grasped the way the shape of the graphemes, the words and the poetic texts in their expressive function , are used . Through his words, he could evoke a cacophony of reduced graphemes merging with the forms that frame them such as triangles and points of arrows with what they have for symbolic value setting them in different times . For Azzaoui, this new grapheme tries to assert itself in a mixture of poetic and dramatic realities which interferes through a nimble rhythm in interaction with what the painting represents.

As for the Iraqi artist Rafaa Nasseri and for the Egyptian Tharouat Al-Bahr, they maintain the domination of the abstract atmosphere on the work of art , the grapheme of which is the focus and where, in a style characterized by the precision and the balance of forms and colors, all the masses and all the volumes which are in the neighborhood of the grapheme aim towards him. Thereby, a harmony between the visual memory and the aural memory transforming the grapheme into an ultimate symbol inside the image, is created . The significance of the symbol in this sense is determined by the capacity of the audience to grasp its specificity and to intuitively perceive it as a symbolic figure.

Moreover the Egyptian artist Mahmoud Abdallah is considered as one of the artists who, in their relationship to the grapheme, grasped the various facets of its linguistic, decorative, social and spiritual reality. Indeed, although he has lived and settled down in Europe, where he got acquainted with the Western culture, he neither recorded his experience in the wake of the cleavages setting the artistic models in Europe, nor subjected to the trends which prevailed there. Because, he (authentically) dealt with the aesthetics of the Arab calligraphy in an authentic way when the time was stable, continuous and not fragmentary. The time is the same, wherever we are and independently of places and ages, while the work of art remains imbued with the interaction of the artist with his time .

Notes :

* Antique (and current) city in Tunisia

** Jan Hus (1369-1415) is a religious reformer. He was excommunicated and accused of heresy by the Church for having burnt the bible .

*** Jordano Bruno (1548-1600) Italian Philosopher of the Renaissance. He was condemned for having burnt the bible and died on the pyre in Rome.

1- Boas, Franz: The mind of primitive man, Free Press, on 1938.

2- It is a succinct explanation of the concept of the cultural identity which needs here to be distinguished from the analysis of the individual identity. (The author)

3- Azmi Bishara: In memory and History (article). Carmel, Carmel Cultural Institution, Ramallah, 1997.

4- Afif al-Bahnassi: Arab presence in the West creations (article), Unity magazine, National Council for Arab culture, Rabat, 1990

5- Blond Al-Haidari: Arab character in plastic art, (article), Unity magazine, National Council for Arab Culture, Rabat, 1990

6- Muhammad Noureddine Afaya : Arab plastic art and culture questions, (article), Unity magazine, National Council for Arab Culture, Rabat, 1990

ISLAMIC ARTS IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION

Presenting the Islamic art requires long-term documentary researches as its spiritual and philosophic dimensions are deep. This art developed, indeed, over fourteen centuries before reaching its decay today, in its original cradle: towns and Arabic cities in particular and Islamic ones in general.

This situation is elicited by a more and more wide increase of the destruction of the urban fabric due to the extension of ways allowing vehicles to have access to alleys and to the least accessible zones of the old districts. Cities have so lost their specificities, essentially their districts of trade and jobs which represent what is referred to as the " Islamic artistic heritage ".

To protect us against the confusions and the ambiguities surrounding this art, consequences of haphazard studies: Orientalist synthetic, illustrative emphatic or nostalgic dissertation, we must put it within its exceptional traditional context as a constituent of the essence of craft , architectural and cultural heritage.

It might be important to recall here that this Islamic and Arabic artistic heritage suffers from a kind of exaggerated polarization today. It is caught in-between two opposite opinions: between those who call up to a passionate preservation of an idealized past, to its absolute canonization and to a fanatic attachment to the vestiges of its previous motionless forms, whatever the contradictions are with the current space and time and, besides, those who claim to be followers of modernity and contemporaries resolutely opposed to reactionary and regressive modernity without any concession. Caught in this friction , the heritage apparently suffers, from the tumult of these opposite reactions taken without deep reflection, in the haste and regardless of the experiences of others and lessons learned.

In this respect, Japan is not the least which knew how to protect the spirituality of its arts in the imperial capital Kyoto and establish its technical, electronic, IT and robotics

modernity in its material capital Tokyo.

It is worth noticing , in this respect, that if all cities of the world are distinguished by a horizontal extension, the Arabic cities are the only ones to opt for a vertical town planning which buries the layers of their cultural memory in an archaeological sedimentation. The modern city in the making swallowed up the body of the old and made the works of the cultural heritage vanish .

Another considerable example is of New Mexico City built next to the old town destroyed during a devastating earthquake. The researchers, taking all tendencies together , agree to recognize that this inheritance, with all its traditions accumulated through generations of artists and craftsmen, constitutes a fertile collection witnesses of a civilization, its crafts and treasures of its illuminating , bright or brilliant, transparent or thoughtful productions.

That starts with ceramic to the brilliant incandescence quite of delicate colors, in the lamp shop and its night lights , going through the hammered stained-glass windows. We shall state all products made by arts of glass works, the mirror trade , plasters , metals and the wood (marquetry, wooden lattice, furnitures).

Quite as embroidered fabrics with gold and silver, silk, carpets , braids , jewels, candlestick , bowls, parchments, marble and ivories. Besides , we shall not forget, the architectural works such as capitals , arches and stalactites and other creations of these sacred or profane arts.

It is necessary to insist and repeat that we need research libraries to list, if only in a partial way, all these scattered treasures in museums and private collections! Those who remained permanently endangered, are daily exposed to organized theft by the World mafia and proposed by the horse dealers and the traffickers of the archaeological relics, on the Euro-American marketplaces.

These highly varied crafts fit the organization of the Islamic city and cover the activity of its souks, workshops and main roads (the town planning of Koufa and Basra gives evidence of it), giving names of jobs to the various districts of the city and this since the Eighth Century after J.C such the districts of the cabinet makers, jewelers, brass workers, paper-makers, traders of wools, etc.

It would be vain, within the framework of the Islamic city, to try to separate between purely architectural works and traditional crafts. It applies , for example, to the "mihrab", kind of apse always placed on the south wall-Qibla-and directing, as the needle of a compass, ways and districts to Kaaba of Mecca; as it's the same for Minbars, pulpits to be preached, stalactites in plaster, the stores, wooden lattice , windows, ponds,public fountains, sanctuaries, mausoleums …

Some of these works cannot be seen from the outside such as these pieces of pottery which cover the internal walls of the mosque El Azhar to amplify the voice of preachers and the Imams in an acoustic concern which justifies, besides, the shape given to singing and music rooms inspired by stringed instruments such as the Oud.

Contrary to what prevails in the west, the arts in the Islamic society do not confirm this well known hierarchy which separates the major arts of the culture as calligraphy, sculpture, poetry and music on one side and functional decorative arts as ceramic, earthenware, mosaic and glass utensils in metal or in pottery. All these productions fall within crafts , included in a gnostic or the Sufi sense as art or taste.

The definitions of the art are multiple in the Arabic and Islamic area. We can recall some, for example, the Moutanabi's definition of the art of poetry as an " art of the allusion " or the one advanced by Ibn Khaldun, in his "Prolegomena" that the music is the first germ of the degeneration of civilizations. (1)

I propose, here, another division of the Islamic arts and crafts, based on two classes. The first one, which is not taken into account in this study, concerns the jobs which mass-produce for the consumption, especially in our time; it's like that potteries and ceramic of the region of Sallee, known in Morocco, intended for the tourist export but identically reproduced as in the factories of Marseille in France. These objects are characterized by the repetitive aspect of the motives and the lack that they let show through artistic sensitivity. They just tended to answer the tourist taste or to the most commonplace Orientalist clichés like slippers or tarbooshes.

The second class, the subject of this study, includes the arts and crafts which could be referred to as the arts and crafts of " the perfection " .The excellence they reach affects, the "perfection" of the Sufi bliss (the Wajd). Indeed this chosen terminology refers, to the perfection looked for in the jobs which were under the patronage of the spiritual corporations of the Sufi brotherhoods which were known as "tasteful communities", taste which leads some of them to the truth, like the Great Master Jelal-Eddine Rûmi who says: " Several ways lead to the truth, mine I chose it in the music and the dance ".

This reminds me of an article, I read during my studies, written by Louis Massignon, journeyman of the French archaeological expedition , where he spoke about spiritual corporations (as if he discovered them) and of the authority which they exercised as well on the requirement of this perfection in the jobs and the arts as at the level of the allocation of trading and professional licenses or their withdrawal and the case of carelessness or failure. (2)

So, we can assert, that the priority granted to bright substances, in the main line besides the verse of the Koran " light on light ", to give to the Islamic city a look of a lantern in the lights crossed as in a kaleidoscope. A city full of all the jobs mirrors trade,

glass-making, ceramic, glass mosaic playing reverberations and reflection of multicolored facades and made iridescent in the water of bowls and ponds.

These jobs, as we said it , affect, under the vigilance of the brotherhoods, the mystic spiritual and subtle perfection; it's like that also in the manufacture of the musical instruments which accompany the Sufi singings such as the miser and the duff. We therefore deduce that many of these traditional jobs are surrounded with mysteries and secrets. The know-how was passed on in an esoteric way according to a generational professional chain going from the fathers to the sons . A fact that explains these patronymics taken from names of jobs : Najjar (carpenter), Haddad (smith), Saegh (jeweler), etc. Certain secrets of these jobs had so disappeared with their holders. This applies to the manufacture of the Sabres of Damascus, stained-glass windows in the painted glass (3) or by certain draperies with spiritual and artistic value which were suspended from the walls as the draperies of Kaaba which were changed every year.

We stumble here over the relation between the " spiritual flavor " and this " brotherhood of taste " to Sufis, on the link of the "clairvoyance" and the "clairvoyant". Several explanations have been proposed by their texts of the notions of "Ecstasy", "Situation", " spiritual State ", of " Colors' Symbolism "; we shall not approach these complex subjects which are related to the "Theophany" or the manifestation of the divine in the heart and the spirit and we shall limit to see what arises as World damages in the structure of the urban organization today involving the jobs mentioned above.

The damage begins with the mindless modernization (dishonest) and the destruction of the urban fabric of the traditional old towns from now on in decomposition, in degeneration to resume the expression of Ibn Khaldun. This is the case in Damascus after the implementation of the " project ECOCHAR " and the destruction of densely populated districts (between Aïba and soul SA Roger). According to his founder , this project works on the assumption that " any vestige whether spiritual or cultural, becomes tourist as soon as it is isolated by its social fabric "; and it is this process which is underway today. Let us observe this massive invasion of the old districts by cars under the constraints of the world economy. In the Fatimid Cairo bridges came there to glance through historic monuments again to facilitate the traffic .

This globalization modernizer imposes a handcraft mass manufacture of which makes the products and their noble materials lose the sharpness of their know-how, for example , potteries of Salee , mentioned above, reproduced in abundance, in the factories of Marseille.

The reports of the UNECO indicate the progressive and the daily disappearance of the African living languages in front of the expanding use of the Anglo-Saxon languages.

It should be recalled here how the traditions of the Arabic calligraphy ceased

evolving, in confined rear boutiques after the demolition of the district of the calligraphers in Damascus (Al Boussa) and that of the paper-makers (Al Meskieh). What is more serious is the decrease of these art crafts as a result of the spread of the use of block capitals and digital characters or preference lately granted, to the Latin characters with the pressures of the globalization of knowledge on the net . The list of these cultural losses does not stop increasing day after day, to begin with the damages of the military occupation until those engendered by the cultural invasion; a topic of which the analysis exceeds the limits of this study.

Notes

(1) The organization ARSICA-ISTAMBUL stemming from the organization of the Islamic Congress organized in Tunis, in June, 2008 a congress about " The implication of the traditional handcrafts in urbanization projects."

(2) The text in French is published in an archaeological periodical (Syro-Lebanese) of the French archaeological expedition dating back to the forties .

(3) The big specialist of the painted painted glass in France, the father Jacques Laffont recognizes that it is in Damascus where we find the founder homes of this technique of the painted glass, rectifying this common European idea which would have appeared with the Gothic churches of XIX th century. It was a technique spread during the Omeyyad reign in the eighth century.

Habib Bida

Updating Arab-Islamic aesthetic thought in the era of globalization: Questioning its Western perception

Thanks to art, man acquired his humanity and broke loose from animality. Art allowed him to assert himself as a speaking, thinking being but also as a creative one.

We can say that thought/language/art constitute three united dimensions of a triangle framed by science.

It is ironic to express the notion of globalization, we chose as equivalent to the French word the Arabic term of `awlama, the word world has for Arabic equivalent " al Alamo . Globalization " al `awlama " is so, in Arabic, a verb extracted from a noun which indicates the world " al `alam "; what gives the impression that the world, " geographically and historically "speaking , generate a need to accept people and their " human symbols " and to gather them and bring them together in the same entity, a unique place, in spite of their diversities and their differences.

The theorists of globalization defend the idea of the need to bring men together towards the same direction , a unique direction" wahid ", united " mouwahad " and politically, economically, socially and culturally uniting " mouwahid ". The question remains in which direction do we wish that united men, move forward?

The Arabic term for globalization, `" awlama ", could be integrated into another chain of distraction starting from " alm ", science or knowledge. Between " Al `alm " and " al `alam ", science and the world there would be only a breath of a vowel, the "aleph". Science and world! Tawhidi did not say that " Science in the world is of all horizons and every reasonable man should urge himself to acquire it ".

This is the case with the distinctive nature of Arabic language , language of Islam, which allows us to establish possible links between certain words, as so many germ cells in the significant fabric of language : `" alm " - science,-`-`" alim " scientist-, " alam " world-,

`" alamia " - internationalism, `" awlama " - globalization; very close words of which some light formal features change the meanings according to contexts where they appear.

Man is in all parts of the world, in the North pole as in the South Pole, in the East as in the West; Is this man the same, so that we can speak about him according to a single speech which would make these diverse existential concerns throughout the world more sensitive? It is striking that in spite of wars and bloody conflicts over centuries, we always remain confined to our way of thinking, in this vision of the uniqueness of man in his relation with the uniqueness of the world and that of the absolute!

The same applies to art and culture; our speech remains anthropocentric, strange to other beings; because art also has known common definitions unifying the man to himself , to nature, to the universe and to the environment in which he lives.

In fact, this dreamed or hoped perception, does not comply with reality. It only exists as a fantasy for those who believe in the absolute uniqueness of the world. To talk theoretically about a universal man or an absolute globalization, without defining bare facts , confirms a paradox in view of the crisis which humanity lives today which makes that very few are the ones who believe in the existence of this man who would represent humanity.

The reversal of fundamental concepts on one hand, the loss of nodal function of philosophy built on dialogue, debate and wider and total reflection based on the perception of complex structure which organizes man's relationship to nature on the other hand. At the end, this vision of human beings as individuals' dust, scattered in the world, without any link which gathers them nor any essential conviction, all this makes that sharing of a certain number of human principles and common interests gives way to private and selfish interests. This has an impact on individual plan as well as on communities, states and nations.

Art, as a universal concept has been a constant fact of philosophers and creators thought . Far from being limited to an elite, it affects the Man in his dialectical relation to nature and the universe. Beyond the diversity of artistic expression forms and used means, a general and simple definition of art could be remembered ; a definition which would originate from a vision of man as a whole for a symbiosis with its universality and close relation to this individuals' dust scattered around the planet. Indeed art is, an essential element in the reunification of beings and their constitution in a creative and dynamic energy which, far from any isolation, acts in interaction with the world and thinks on a human scale and not only in a selfish way.

Art, in its creative dimension , is the investment of man on the subject and this work which embodies and depicts him . What is meant by subject is all which can be depicted including man himself. The essence of the human being as a pearl that the artist cultivates

and the work of art pulls out of the darkness of ignorance and exposes it to light in witness of knowledge and the expression of creative and accomplished humanity.

This reconciliation achieved by art which deeply affected the man , leads to other reconciliations without which there is no development of the creative and inventive potential. This is what Ikhwan Essafa meant when they said: « To live alone, we can only live bad. To lead a pleasant life , so great is man›s need for different products that he could not obtain without the contribution of others. Life is short and the fields are wide-ranging; a reason which urged men to be gathered in villages and cities to help each other «.

Drawing on this , we can assert that globalization, in its artistic and cultural dimensions, was not born at the end of the twentieth century, it is as old as History. This universal civilization in which we live today is only the result of this undeclared cultural and economic globalization, henceforth confirmed by world trade agreements and procedural texts and by application.

Artistic globalization is attested by all human philosophies which had dealt with man and his relationship , as a creator, to nature, which he had thought of it as a producing value of knowledge and beauty. However, a dimension of this philosophy is formerly encysted, nevertheless, of the clearest and the most influential in the formation of knowledge , aesthetics and humanity of which artists had drawn and go on drawing it today throughout the world. It is about Arab-Islamic philosophy.

Some might wonder what has arrived at this philosophical thought which had presided over the development of the Arab-Islamic art and to ask about the reasons that made it disappear of the field of knowledge and culture to be replaced by the so-called theological exegesis which peddle the idea that art, in the land of Islam, is struck, from the start, by a prohibition and a censorship which suppress its blooming and prevents it from rising up to the level the art reached in other non- Muslim countries.

An important writing was dedicated to Islamic art the works of which testify of an inescapable heritage. Today, nevertheless observing programs of the media and policies of the governmental or non governmental bodies we realize that more and more focus is closely paid to Islam, Islamic legislation affecting the individual and community behavior or striking issues which generate acts of certain Islamic fanatics at the risk of making of this religion the first and only danger which threatens humanity on earth . This obviously at the expense of Islamic artistic and aesthetic thought almost absent from the scene while Islamic civilization has shone for a very long time and extended from East to West marking by the seal of its thought the evolution of European civilization during the twentieth century.

Certain Western thinkers are responsible for this dodging of the Arab-Islamic artistic and aesthetic philosophical thought. They indeed contributed to anchor in our

spirits the idea that Islam and Art can only diverge. So this rejection of pictorial art in all its different forms, remains in the subconscious of a lot, as reprehensible or forbidden. Certain researchers still convey in their papers this idea of the determination of the forms of Arab-Islamic art by prohibition of the depiction.

We want in this intervention to present these points of view and, in counterpoint, to explain some elements of the reflection of Arab philosophers and artists who refute these opinions and who put forward other alternatives that we consider as basis for the Renaissance of our Islamic arts both from the point of view of thought, assumed practice and essential choices for the promotion of modern, thoughtful Islamic artistic forms in tune with the requests of time, except deceptive oppositions which we adopted in a spirit of adaptation or band-aid.

What are Western opinions on the question and how they were refuted by our early artists?

When we go through studies dedicated to the Arab-Muslim art and its aesthetic bases, we realize that those Westerners and Orientalists bases are prevailing . They are the reference of many specialists and are more and more dedicated either by the reproduction of ideas which they hold or by translation that is made. Nobody can deny the contribution of these works, regardless of quality or perspectives; they all contribute to the advancement of the scientific research in this domain which can only benefit from it as long as these contributions are not taken in an absolute way, as they remain subjected to critical spirit, thorough examination and checking. It is a warranty on scientificity of the work is always based on meticulous analysis and reconsideration of the hypotheses whatever is the author's authority or the value of his theses.

One of the consequences of this importance granted to Western reference is this prevailing idea, in the community of scholars in general aesthetics, that our aesthetic reflection remained locked up in the circle of a unique literary thought, and that it brought nothing apart from this dimension. Arabic artistic heritage is almost exclusively literary and ignores the variety of fine arts, dance, sculpture, music, etc. (1)

Thus this assertion is surprising , without nuance, in the introduction of the book *The Aesthetics through ages* translated by Michel Assi. This categorical tone allows the author to save a thorough research on an aesthetic basis of this heritage covering the various ages of Arab civilization. As if the masterpieces of this culture were hybrid, realized spontaneously and naturally without reflection nor intellectual basis ! Western aesthetics remain the only legitimate resource in theory and in practice.

It is here to show the injustice towards the efforts of Arab thinkers whose production clutters shelves in printed or handwritten studies which deepen and explain the bases of aesthetics of various Arab-Islamic arts.

Thus hastily and in a very reduced vision of our heritage, Michel Assi ends up with this judgment : "we were deprived of the basis of artistic reflection which constitutes the aesthetics. It only elaborates through abundance of a reflection maintaining an appropriate balance with the literary thought and based on a methodical coherent structural unity . This is the way it can rise to the level of the philosophical thought or the philosophy of art and arts. " [(2)] This judgment drawn by the author can only be the result of a misunderstanding of this thought or a lack of knowledge of the philosophy.

In reality we were not deprived of these mentioned bases, we broke loose from it because we were only following the Westerners in what they said. We were led by them; we relied on them and on all that they said concerning our artistic and literary heritage satisfying us with translating their speeches instead of asserting ourselves by deepening and enriching our knowledge of our heritage.

How were Western studies on our Arab-Islamic aesthetics useful for us? What are the ideas which they rooted about the problem of Arab-Islamic art?

For the majority of researchers the study of the Arab-Islamic art goes through the issue of prohibition which would define its existence . [(3)] This seems to be an agreement between most of Western Orientalists and some Arab researchers. They all tackled this issue and drawn this first conclusion, essential and global for them that " prohibition of figurative and mimetic representation has made Arab-Islamic art, since its beginnings, because it is prohibited, an immature art,. " [(4)] This opinion proceeds of the conviction that visual art, such as known by Westerners is the legitimate form and natural development in the alder of which other arts must be assessed. For us it is a false idea deriving from an obvious racist thought for which there is only a Western art and other conceptions than his.

The second conclusion is the thesis which explains the non development of visual art in Arab world by the ban on figurative representation which would have opened the way to the emergence of calligraphy and the adoption of arabesque at the expense of other forms of art. It indicates that the Arab-Islamic art is a decorative art in the purest sense of the term, that is a late decorative art compared with the vision of plastic arts in West.

This marginalization of Islamic art was certainly left behind. Although there was convergence of certain Western researchers on the legitimacy of the specific shape of this art, they did not go beyond traditional explanations of its genesis by prohibition and censorship. Among these, the French Etienne Souriau who asserts in his work *The Aesthetics through the ages*: " It is necessary for us to emphasize a major point namely the non-existence of arts relative to the depiction and representation on one hand and the ascendancy, on the other hand, decorative arts were essentially based on Arabic abstract forms. The classic explanation addresses this reality as a consequence of the ban

on the depiction of human beings on the Koran and of any depiction in general. Islam was condemned by consequence of the only abstract geometrical forms, which is a big mistake because, in the Koran, there is no categorical ban on this order. " [5]

If Etienne Souriau questions this thesis of prohibition, as far as it appears nowhere, in the first Islamic constitution he only finds reason in this absence of figurative art and this ascendancy of abstract art that in the fact that " Islamic spirituality particularly distrusts risks of figurative art and finds a stronger reassurance in the abstract ". [6]

We do not notice a big difference between this approach and the previous one, between the thesis of prohibition and what it induces and Islamic spirituality in what it makes according to him.

Alexandre Papadopoulo's position does not deviate from that of Souriau. He produced a work on the aesthetics of Islamic painting the basic idea of which is summed up in this assertion that " Islamic artist conceived the modern aesthetic revolution six or seven centuries earlier. Thanks to the prohibition of depiction of human beings and thanks to theologians who knew nothing about painting , he grasped that the essence of any art and its supreme law is to be an autonomous world only obeying its internal logic. It is what constitutes the corpus of Islamic painting ".

In fact, this means that the prohibition of figurative or mimetic image remains the ultimate basis of the interpretation of aesthetics and Arab-Islamic art. It is as though the author lets suggest that this aesthetic was only the product of chance and did not proceed of a mature reflection. Being aware that the issue stems from another determination depending on a deep thought, Papadopoulo cannot refrain from considering this one as minor, coming from this issue of prohibition or as an extension to it. This is really astonishing. Well aware of this thought which provides a basis for the Arab-Muslim art, he does not hesitate to put Islamic artist before the Shakespearean question " to be or not to be"; a question , that prohibitions about art, raise. So the author ponders: " Can we assert that Islamic painter knew how to find, through a sublime image, the answer to this fundamental question and that without negative concession he transformed his art into a Sufi way for him at first and for all those who perceive in the image more than a depiction of a simple world. It is in this limit that ends the apogee of Islamic painting ". [7]

We cannot deny that Dr Alexandre Papadopoulo thesis opened new perspectives for the review of Islamic art and the study of its various forms. But it needs to be recognized that it leans on the issue of prohibition of figurative representation and imitation of nature more generally. In his book , he puts forward that " this is why we can only start from the works themselves and the objective signs which they show to see to what extent they conform to the constraints of Islamic aesthetics that is the fundamental respect for prohibition rule of the depiction of human beings and nature more generally ". [8]

If we consider this rule, Sufi awareness according to which the artistic practices his work , shifts to the second level; it seems to be the mistake in which Papadopoulo falls. He does not go more deeply to really grasp this awareness, to reveal the relation of this one with the Muslim art and the organization of the elements which it constitutes. Besides Papadopoulo maintained , his assertions by substantial examples of Arab heritage. He only just approached this awareness in its relation with the painting , neglecting its link to the Arab calligraphy which, as a form of Islamic art, cannot be isolated from the painting and considered, like what many researchers do, as a compensatory diversion for imitative painting.

Considering the religious ban on mimetic depiction and imitation of nature generally as one of the generating bases of Arab-Islamic forms of art, painting , calligraphy, arabesques, belittles the value of Islamic artist and reduces him to the level of someone who accidentally discovers, an aesthetics which allows him to reconcile the requirements of his faith, the legitimacy of his existence and the assertion of his art.

Besides, the opinion that this aesthetic is the fruit of theologians thought who understood nothing of art confirms us the idea that it is not based on any theoretical philosophical basis and that it is nothing but a serious mistake which must be refuted by a meticulous examination of the heritage of Arab thought. This opinion illustrates that Arab art is based on the concept of nature imitation in its highest meaning, an imitation which conveys the fulfillment of man in the Sufi meaning of the term and not in its superficial one given by West.

The question , then, is as follows : How to tackle this issue?

We think that Alexandre Papadopoulo's mistake, as other researchers, results from the use of the concept of " imitation of nature ", a concept which developed in West in relation with the very wide-spread classic realistic art in the fifth and sixth centuries, while , in his study , he should have started from different artistic expressions which our Arab-Islamic world witnessed, to understand them from within , that is in their relations to the epistemic context in which they were spread.

Calligraphy is one of Arabic arts. According to Ibn Khaldun , it is a noble job , and it is one of the peculiarities which distinguishes man from animal. (9) Tawhidi, a philosopher of the fourth century, says that " beautiful, it makes truth much brighter ". (10) It is a small craft such as painting and arabesque, but also prose, poetry or music.

For Ibn Mandhour " Sina'a ", a small craft, has for synonym ' " Amal ", work. Ibn Khaldun defines it as a power of practical ability. According to Tawhidi it " follows the work of nature as this one conveys movements of inspiration and its marks. " (11) The small craft differs in its deeper meaning of the "mehna", profession or, better, a responsibility . As for Tawhidi a small craft, " supposes the idea of " dholl ", a submission to a necessity

and partially recovers small crafts .

" Sin'a" is good a responsibility but freed from constraints related to it .Certainly , in some aspects of submission to a necessity in the small craft but not to the point to be the truth. [12]

Indeed, the small craft has its philosophic truth, truth, far from submission, which expresses the relation of man to the universe, to the comprehensibility which it has of it and the capacity it provides for this one to come true. The craft is an art. According to Aristote it is " this manifestation of the action of speaking man who creates objects imitating products of nature, as far subject and shape are concerned, and having utilitarian purposes and similar aesthetic functions". [13] What exists in a sensitive way is, indeed, either produced by nature or by crafts. For the philosopher, as also for Tawhidi and Miquawaih, this one imitates nature. The same conception , we find in Ikhwan Essafa, the Brethren of the Purity, who classify creatures according to four sorts : " artificial, natural, essential and divine. [14] Artificial objects would be then natural works, natural objects would be essential products and essential objects would be divine products". This conception of creation follows a vertical hierarchy starting from the top, Truth " Haq " (God) according to Sufi terminology which creates the breath, " nafs " which creates in its turn nature which produces sensitive creatures (mineral, vegetable, four elements, animal and man) until man's turn who creates by imitating nature. This vision arises from of the theory of emanation (creation of the universe) which stems from the Pythagorean and Platonic thought by Plato, Arab thinkers of the Middle Ages as Kindî, Farabi, Avicenna and Ikhwan Essafa. In this filiation we understand the assertion of Miskawaieh, coming on the heels of Tawhidi, that the craft imitates nature which translates the movements of inspiration and its marks.

The act of creation which starts from the first creator is delivered by inspiration, by nature and falls to man, is a complex operation. We think that these phases agree to be manners to give image to the hyle, the original subject ; an image which is appreciated not as appearance but as a substance and a complex structure in the order and the system of which forms, in interaction, clash with constituents of the subject and with their availability to embody them. It is in this nature imitating the inspiration, in this mimesis where the creative man imitates the nature, lies the issue of Arab-Islamic art. Indeed, this frame welcomes various Arab artistic forms such as calligraphy, arabesque, music, etc. We find tracks in the Arab philosophers who took care of questions relative to these arts. Except that imitation here is not to be taken in the sense given by Lalande of " a doctrine which bases art on imitation, that is the expression of things as they are, without differentiation between the beautiful and the ugly ". [15] It is rather to be taken in the definition of Ibn Mandhour in his work *The Language of the Arabs,* as an imitation of

actions. The imitation of nature, certainly, but as active not as acted. Imitation of the energy in its will and its power to give to the hyle of representations (images) so that it shows itself as what it is. This, obviously, within the framework of a system resulting from the perception that man has made of the universe starting from the structure of natural bodies of mineral, vegetable, animal and his own structure; also in the way he comprehends forms of structuring of these bodies according to order, harmony and proportion in their relations to internal structural potentiality of subject and in its capacity to be embodied in an image which we try to give to it.

So imitation is in the principle and not in the appearance. It stems from the nature of structuring and not the external appearance of the structure. It is from this logic that follows " the crafts " (the techne) of the Arab-Muslim art, in its larger meaning, and its various forms such as the calligraphy or the arabesque.

When we closely examine these two arts, according to a structural perspective, we realize that they answer precise rules of layout. In calligraphy, we can observe how letters and words are organized, in the format , according to laws of order, relations and breaks but also, according to proportions of the spacings and the concordance between the shape of lines and points.

We find in the *epistle on the proportioned writing*, established by Assaker Khalil Assaker [(16)], the best argumentation in favor of the hypothesis of calligraphy as an art stemming from the imitation of the creative power of nature. This letter says : " the reason of this admiration for the proportioned writing you find it in the fact that the principle of calligraphy is to grasp the shape of word so that it is passed on between generations and so that everyone perceives it , even absent, as if it witnessed it. Thanks to it, we transcribe knowledge and we note the wisdom this function finds its completeness only in the deployment of letters layout and configuration of words according to the appropriate proportions similar to those existing in animals or plants for good measure of organs and balance of parts. Human soul being fascinated by the beauty and inclined to the charm of natural harmony as well as the person with a strong visual sense as the sound. " [(17)]

The same approach we find it in the reading of the poem " the rhyme r " of Ibn Baweb by Ibn Wahid and the explanation which he gives to the word " taswir ", representation, which he takes in the sense of research for the " graphic plan " giving to every word good organic proportions of the figure as it shows itself in nature that art is only imitating. " [(18)]

So imitation of the creative strength of nature falls within what the Brethren of Purity (Ikhwen Essafa) express by " God's imitation is within man's ability ". They so assert that " pupils and disciples, in their acts and productions imitate the acts of teachers and initiates who themselves imitate the wise men where in lies this desire of angel statues and this stimulus to imitate them ". Moreover the same applies for conceiving

philosophy " as God's imitation according to human potential ". [19] But this issue of imitation is not about rivalry of creation, as Westerners say, to incur its wrath; it is rather about a closer way of being , to help him achieve his alike the man considered as vicar of God on earth. " God only likes the skill and skillful artist, we really approach it only by work, knowledge or prayer ". [20]

Finally, just before concluding , can we support this idea of the end of epic Islamic art? Assert that this one was only the fruit of this refusal of mimesis or to claim, as Alexandre Papadopoulo, that these forms are closed worlds answering the simple religious faith of artists to whom we forbade reproductions of nature?

For us, contrary to the dominant thought , Arab and Islamic artist, whether he is a calligrapher, a sculptor-decorator, a painter or architect, tried, within his means, to equal God and to imitate nature in its creative energy and not in its stilted creation. It so produced objects, the structure of which corresponds to the structures of the objects of the world because of this desire of man to join not with sensitive but with rational, not with outside appearance but with deep structure. This reveals this will to express itself as an inventive , creative and active artist. This attitude conveys the rise of human being , a trend towards the assertion and to the yearning to be close to the creator of the unique universe the simplest of which we are only the successors on earth. So much " The mastery of any art is a God's imitation".

It seems that it is the core question to ask . The Arab heritage presents on this problem abundant abstract elements which allow to read the link between the Arab-Islamic aesthetics and the Arab art and to refute the idea, which is still widespread today, that this art is only the fruit of the ban on representation and on a more general scale, the imitation of nature.

NOTES

(1) Ibn Mandhour, *Lisan Al-Arab*. (Encyclopedia of the Arabic language) , Lebanon, T 3.

(2) Ibn Khaldun, *Al-mukaddima* (Prolegomena), Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi , Lebanon.

(3) Ikhwen Essafa, Arrasael (Letters) Ed established by Khair-Eddine Ezzarkali, Egyptian Printing office, Cairo, 3T publisher. Cairo, Vol.3

(4) Abou Hayen Ettawhidi, Corpus and marginalia, Cairo, 1951.

(5) Alexandre Papadopoulo, Aesthetics of Islamic painting? Trad. Ali Louati, Ben Abdallah Foundation for publishing and distribution, Tunis, 1970

(6) Afif Bahnasi, Aesthetics of the Arabic art, the world of the knowledge, Kuwait, 1972

(7) Asaker Khalil Asaker, Epistle on the proportioned written form, Institute of the Arabic manuscripts T1-1, Cairo, 1955.

(8) Etienne Souriau, Aesthetics through centuries, Trad. Michel Assi, T1, Ed. Oweidet, Beirut, 1974.

Hanna Habib

Muslim arts in the era of the globalization

Introduction

It is appropriate, at the outset, to admit the realities which we currently live and to recognize the changes known by the Arab region under the influence of the great political events and their repercussions on the everyday life of the Arabs. We should also mention the great questions which the twentieth century poses to these people in the vision of their future as well as in the perception that they have of various domains of the thought, philosophy, economy, culture, creation and customs. We should also mention the role played by the Western countries: European, American or Zionist in the failure of the dreams of several Arab generations. Between hope and illusion these generations painfully lived crumbling and divisions as well as the renunciation of watchwords and programs formerly displayed , to integrate the new circumstances of globalization which, in fact, is only the logical result of the ambitions of the old European colonization and the current form of the Western neocolonialism .

We believe we can assert that the Arab and World artistic production is also closely linked to challenges and debates of the Western European center as far as this one is the essential core where the cultural richness is often made through a process of imitation, correspondence and the reproduction of the experiences of the Other and their institutions, in particular people of the less developed countries - called countries of the third world and particularly the Arab countries.

The Arab visual art, in its historical and contemporary journey, is fundamentally linked to the European central challenges -from the East and the West- and is largely dependent on them. This could be observed from forms and very numerous factual images. The European Orientalism quite as the Arab Occidentalism is a first contribution in the development of this human artistic production which offered us the means to discover the modes of expression of our actual being and its incarnation at the level of various intellectual and visual fields of the culture depicted in the painting of the Arab memorial,

the beauty of the natural sites, the interior spaces closed or opened on outsides full of people and social links depicted through expressive scenes and aesthetic compositions as we find in Western arts of Europe .

It should be also noted that the channels for exchanges between the European countries and those of the Arab world ensured an essential role in anchoring the artistic creativity in our daily cultural life. Our cognitive or visual memory, is full of experiences of artists who drew singular ways leaving clear marks in the course of the Arab visual art at local, Arab and international level. This has included several names, from visual artists who have fed on the resource of this European iconographic memory to make it their cultural and operating reference and to recognize it as a subject of their experiences and their tries . Masters of the European painting were their models; Da Vinci, Titien, Van Eyck, Rembrandt, David, Rodin, Daumier, Manet, Renoir, Delacroix, Cézanne, Matisse, Paul Klee, Mondrian, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Juan Miro, Francesco Goya, Picasso, Vasarely and many others were fundamental landmarks in their artistic careers . This obviously left a deep mark in their universe with all the marks of social, philosophical , political, and economic changes, as it also introduced new concepts which intensely and directly influenced the evolution of the pictorial movement and Arab artistic work.

What globalization means:

Globalization, like the world capitalism of which it emanates, is a phenomenon sustained by a kind of paradox or polarization. Within the same perspective where it claims to unify the world on a capitalist basis, it puts it in a clear distinction between developed capitalist poles and underdeveloped peripheral zones. Therefore it pushes one part of the world to modernity and to post-modernity it preserves in the other one its most archaic and bad specificities. Two sides of the same coin of which we cannot understand one separately from the other . The world as a whole appears as the basic unit of any analysis and any intelligibility.

Given this reality, it is natural to recognize in the global thinking and in its theoretical corpus a certain antagonism between universal and particular. Among the theorists of globalization, we have some who conceive it as the important core if not the essence of what has to result from the world capitalist economic domination in terms of single reduction and the imposition of a single cultural model on the international scale. This includes the elimination of local and traditional motives for the benefit of dominant world motives more exactly American leaders at the expense of all the others.

The second group of theorists vehemently opposes this American and Western tendency to rule the world, through military interventions throughout the world. Actually, these aspirations do not really stem from the global logic of globalization, on the contrary,

they were the effective accentuation of its negative aspects and destructive impacts on the countries of the least developed world.

Samuel Huntington's papers, in particular his well-known text on The clash of civilizations, are the best assertion of this conception . The author criticizes the United States as well its tendency to the globalism as to its typical policy there and appears as an upholder of isolationism. Huntington thinks that what can seem to be universal values is indifferently applied everywhere, as democratic elections, supremacy of law, human rights. Actually, they are only specific and distinctive cultural values reflecting a cultural structure specific to America and Europe.

The author postulates the existence of eight types of cultures at present throughout the world: Western culture, Russian Orthodox Christian culture, Muslim culture, Indian culture, Japanese culture, Chinese or Confucian heritage to which he confusingly associates with African culture and the likely emergence of what he calls culture of Latin America.

Globalization and peculiarity

Any discussion about globalization entails in its terminological wake, the notion of peculiarity or identity as a consequence . We find ourselves confronted with a series of issues which arises in relation to globalization and peculiarity. This is on a general as well as on a more particular cultural level, affecting for example the debate on the Arab culture in the era of globalization and in more specific domains such as Muslim art under its various forms.

This includes a series of questions:

What is the degree of correspondence in our countries between the upholders of globalization and defenders of religious, political peculiarities etc.?

How far are the upholders of peculiarities resistant in their refusal to outside influences and their fight against globalization and its various manifestations?

How to explain the emerging attempts of acclimatization to the political, economic or cultural globalization in the Arab world, for institutions and individuals?

Actually, most of those who are committed to the peculiarity and the refusal of globalization influences do not refrain from importing the whims of this latter as well as its superficiality on the economic plan as well as on customs. While they organize the leak of their outflow of capital towards the globalized banks, they claim to reject any interaction with the universal culture, which is in reality only the fruit of the human thought, accusing it of being foreign, outside and imported.

To examine globalization more closely, in its various currents of thought, we realize that the common denominator is their mistrust towards a certain form of thought, namely the Western thought of the Age of Enlightenment which has received various cultures of the world and more particularly the Arab culture in its rationalist dimension .

What the Age of the Enlightenment formulated it is, indeed, a Universalism stemming from a vision of the man as a being worthy of freedom, happiness, justice and human rights because he is a God's creature. This means that the human nature which we share requires mutual and common ethical and political requirements. They are so important that we cannot abandon them according to what can arise, by various regions of the world, in the form of strictly local cultural events or phenomena related to the habits and customs or to inherited traditions as to the whims and the pleasures of masters and tyrants as well as limited practices to groups and distinct societies.

Therefore it seems that the rights and the liberties incidentally granted could be questioned, in the same way; because it is actually about imaginary bases which cannot offer any ground to any ethical paradigm. These reasons, imposed on the Spirit of Enlightenment the necessity of making justice and liberties the common good shared by humanity without differences, specificities nor local identities.

The interaction between civilizations

To consider civilizations as the result of a human elaboration, it is natural to perceive the interactions between them in the same prospect , in view of what is happening, generally speaking, in human relations. Far from the assertions of fateful conflicts and yearnings to the end of this clash, the relation between civilizations will remain under this pendulum movement between conflict and dialogue, war and peace, cooperation and competition, pacifying words and friction just like what exists between individuals or between collective human entities such as family or the State.

Whether the relationship between civilizations is friendly or unfriendly, there is always a tangible truth that nobody can deny. Civilizations and successive generations have exchanged gains and experiences , adapted and enriched them as a good from which everybody can benefit all around the world without discrimination, limitation or relative consideration to such or such people. Although the quality and the nature of these transmitted gains were determined by many factors , this does not prevent that there will always be, a tiny element which a civilization inevitably owes to its predecessors. The more the common good increases, the more this cultural sedimentation of common humankind heritage augments . It is then, what we can refer to as the real interaction between civilizations.

The impact of globalization on Muslim art

Arab plastic arts, generally, and Muslim art more specifically , like all other arts in the world, have been subjected to the influence of globalization and they influenced it in their return within the logic of this protean interaction of civilizations and cultures previously mentioned. We ,here, mention the major forms of this interaction:

1. Globalization of art terminology

The term globalization, used within the context of arts and culture, still remains marked by a certain fuzziness like many other words such as identity, modernity, contemporaneity, democracy, human rights, privatization, new world order and many other terms and notions the use of which became common these last years.

Whether analytic or artistic criticism , everyone brings his own conception and his theory according to the sense which he gives to the used terms, to the definition which he attributes to them and in the explanation which he provides them. So their judgments and interpretations are not clear , divergent, contradictory sometimes even so much vague and different their premises are. Some researchers in the domain have been wondering if it is not preferable to give up specifying these terms and this terminology, the indecision being intrinsic to them.

Although the term globalization originally comes from the economic lexicon indicating the elimination of obstacles and the borders in front of the commercial flows to facilitate the free movement of goods and capital, it is not restricted to this definition, it goes beyond it as regards its use within the cultural life with its diverse forms coming from art, literature, heritage or thought.

The predilection of some "amateurs" of plastic arts for the use of these terms referring to globalization as modernity or Universalism is a phenomenon which marks our time. Countering it, trying not to let it lead or deviate from it, is illogical and leaves us on the margins of the culture of our time, as lagging behind. We should rather tackle the study of the forces of globalization, understand its springs , be mindful of its orientations, apply it with complete self-confidence , with full background knowledge of our cultural characteristics, which we shall explore its original depths, real contents and relations with this global culture in its contribution and borrowing with this world culture in its contributions and its loan words. We have no right to cross our powerless arms, to achieve a real work and an authentic action. .

In this cultural and artistic interaction with the globalization consisting in give and take, you should not allocate us of the apprehension of all the influential factors, positive or negative, which cannot affect the citizen or our self-confidence, in our culture, our arts and our civilization. It requires involvement and active concrete contribution to the

dynamics of this world civilization.

We should focus in what follows on one of the domains of the Muslim plastic arts: the modern Arabic calligraphy. Our study will aim at analyzing and revealing the reality of the influence exerted by globalization on this ancestral art distinguished by unique peculiarities which we can not find in other cultures.

2. Arabic calligraphy and globalization (an example of Muslim art)

Nowadays, in some societies that, as regards shape and content, still reject the globalizing thought , it is not, that easy, for the movement of Arabic calligraphy to keep all its vigor and its stability. The revolution introduced by internationalization requires, indeed, to go along with the currents that call for change and renewal. These currents, assisted by this modern technology , led and conquered the domain of the arts, benefit from a social and popular obstruction. Thus they lean on those that are dazzled by the lucid slogans and the lurid appellations which meet in the oblivion of heritage and authenticity.

Few, among the general public, are those who are aware of the numerous shapes, the multiple orientations and varied models of the Arabic calligraphy. This minority is far from containing this raging torrent carrying all means of propaganda and modern tools. The revolution took place and appended its direct marks on contemporary Arab art. It has left traces of its influence, undergoing , in turn, his own, he has clothed her a new modern dress.

Factors which advanced the acclimatization of Arabic calligraphy to globalization

The Arabic calligraphy has artistic, aesthetic, cultural, spiritual characteristics that facilitated its adaptation to the movement of internationalization. We recall here some:

1 / Arabic calligraphy is characterized by an enthralling beauty and a subtle taste in its shapes, designs , decoration and the art of layout, whether on paper or on canvases. The Muslim artist excelled in the art of handling drawings and writings in his creations. So hatched, since the first centuries of the apparition of the Arabic calligraphy, numerous artists and the multiple shapes that have generated interest affirmed in the development of methods, studies and research around of the Arabic letter, his writing, his drawing and the fixing of its shapes on the basis of specific rules.

2 / Arabic calligraphy is to be considered as one of the most beautiful fields of Muslim art. The Arab writing that offers the calligrapher , flexible and manageable letters which naturally suit to the people who have chosen to make a cultural way comforted

in this by their adherence to Islam as a religion which guides them.

3 / Arabic Calligraphy is an art that carries an illustrious Muslim civilization. It had been, is and will always be an overflowing art of vitality, bringing lights, satisfactions and perspectives for the man and the society. In this respect it is the witness to centuries of the Muslim Renaissance and development that has gone with it over time.

4/ Arabic calligraphy is to be considered as one of the most significant emblems in the construction of the Arab-Muslim civilization and the enrichment of human civilization. The Arab and Muslim calligrapher asserts his excellence in this domain to the extent to be considered by those who were looking into the study of Arab calligraphy, as the artist who provided for the words a visual aesthetic function beside its signifying function.

5 / The ability of Arabic calligraphy to adapt, get acclimatized and benefit from modern technological means in order to promote the invention of new forms and various appropriate models but at the same time maintaining a specific distinctive Arab-Muslim stamp.

6/ Arabic calligraphy benefits from infinite artistic possibilities. These letters can further espouse the spirit of the artist. The letters have extreme mutability playing on stretching, contraction, support, extensions, continuity, suspension, cursivity and embracing, a range of absent means in the writing of other languages. In this respect , art belongs, in a straight, conscious, strong and comprehensive way to Universalism .

7/ The artistic contribution added to the shapes and patterns on the letters. Diacritical marks, signs of vocalization or gemination are as many as decorative graphic elements which we cannot do without , for the harmony of the whole, for the game of full and empty or for the function they provide for the correct pronunciation of words . As this can be seen in the calligraphic styles “naskhi”, the “thuluth” and “diwani”. Decorative signs play an obvious role in aesthetics of the Kufi script and confer to the graphic elements previously mentioned a hieratic and monumental aspect.

After what we have just said, we can assert that the wise among Western and enlightened among orientalists recognize the Arabs and Muslims excellence of their language and arts. They also recognize the beauty of the letters of the Arab script. Some argue that writing is distinguished from others by so many specificities:

This writing can take form under any geometric feature. It fits all settings without losing its identity or its true significance. That’s why it has integrated the contribution of several centuries since the beginning of Islam. It remains flexible to the innovations that the talented practitioners introduced in small elements of precision, perfection

and supplementary decorations. This writing is actually a form of engravings highly organized, very elaborate geometric shapes and artistic drawings of which it is very difficult to surround the contours or to count the possibilities of it.

- This marked writing has, for those that study it seriously, a relative similarity with different elements of life. Its thorough analysis can only allow those who look into it, to reach its mysteries.

- This Arabic writing is aesthetically characterized ,from all the world's writings , by features that have assured it ,throughout times a mark in the plastic arts.

- The best proof of this imminent and most delicate position of the Arabic script ,is the use of its characters, by poets, as metaphoric elements of the beauty of the beloved: to the eyebrow would correspond thus the nasal" noun ", to eye the letter "aïn ", to the beard the" waw ", to the mouth the "mim" and the "çad" and to the incisors the "sin" or, on the contrary, the comparison of the letters with the organs of the body.

In addition to what we have just drawn up, one can also say that the Arabic characters are characterized by their naturally shorthand aspect and, at the same time, aesthetic. It is what confirms the Orientalist - writers - professor of oriental languages at the university of Istanbul in Turkey have taught during the Ottoman and Kemalist times "Before the last distress in Turkey the students noted what I dictated to them very quickly because the Arabic characters are naturally shorthand. Today, the students write in Latin characters and for this reason they often ask me to take my dictation repeatedly. We cannot blame them for it because the Latin writing doesn't know the reduction, we are obliged to transcribe the letters in their totality ". Ratifying this shorthand characteristic of the Arabic transcription, he continued affirming that" the Arabic writing is the easiest and clearest writing of the world and it is absurd to get tired to look for other means to make it easier and clearer of what is it already ".

On the other hand, aesthetic, there is unanimity saying that the Arabic calligraphy exceeds all other to occupy the first place. It is reported that Ibn Torjouman, commissioned by the Abbasid Caliph Al Wathek to send gifts to the king of the Christians, saw, hung on the door of their church, a writing in Arabic; he asked for what it was, one answered him that it was a handwritten letter of El Mamoun calligraphed by Ibn Abi Khaled and had been hung there because we had found it beautiful.

Why to globalize the Arabic calligraphy?

Why to globalize the Arabic calligraphy exactly at this time ? The answer is the following : because the people - all people are proud of their history and prompt their children to preserve the heritage. The oblivion of history is, in fact, a deconstruction of

the very entity of the nation and a manner to stop it from reaching light. The inescapable result, in this sense, can only be the marginalization, then the output of the world history of humanity. A nation that loses a part of its history to a people condemned to the decay and loss of all bases of its creative strength.

Therefore, discontinuity is not necessary . All interruption would render the survey of the problematic history otherwise impossible.

This concern for continuity is clear in the cultural and intellectual thought of globalization through its willingness to impose not merely by a simple lawmaking ,but by establishing a system promoting in people adherence and involvement.

Indeed misinterpretations and false analyzes of this heritage prevent reporting of values introduced by such or such art in its most beautiful forms and best illustrations. It must be recognized, moreover that an art is never attributed to an artist apart from all other.

Far from being the product of personal visions, art is the history of a nation accomplished by a set of artists, craftsmen and talented men. These latter make that art opens up to the world and illuminates it with its ardent and sparkling light. They indeed bring to the humanity the best attires of the genius of this Muslim culture bearer of the values of the justice of the good and beauty.

We can consider the Arabic calligraphy as the bridge that connects the various Muslim countries .It also connects all those who are interested in this art perceived not only as a means of communication and expression but also as a true art which allowed the emergence of an elite of Muslim artists who have become exceptionally famous and who have distinguished themselves from their Western counterparts as demonstrated by this entire libraries of books treasures abounding of products of their genius . General survey which proves that these artists have made towards creation and beauty .This proves their contribution to the establishment of rules of this art which became a science with reliable basis. An art exploiting forms of characters and geometric constructions, with flexibility and harmony, offering both creative minds and to men of good taste broader horizons of creating the strongest visual delights .

It is important to remember that the contemporary era has led to the emergence of a group of artists fascinated by Arabic calligraphy. Artists who have significantly contributed to assert the position of this art worldwide . This is thanks to technical skills and the know-how adapted to the spirit and culture of the latter but also to operating capacity data and modern technological means. These artists were able to make new aesthetic configurations to Arabic calligraphy in different modern forms of what have existed before, while preserving the essence of this ancient art. Configurations respecting the aesthetic sense of tradition but open to influences from the art world and its artistic

currents such as the school of optical illusion, the school of geometric , lyrical abstraction and symbolism.

The schools that we have mentioned are only examples of this artistic movement that is in line with the globalization of Arabic calligraphy.

Conclusions and recommendations

I / Conclusions:

The survey and analysis that we have just made of these different types of art works - all belonging to the field of Arabic calligraphy taken as a practical example in Muslim arts - allows us to draw the following conclusions:

1 / The contemporary Arab artist could produce artistic works in the field of Arabic calligraphy, which demonstrates his skills and its ability to develop new technologies for his aesthetic creations.

2 / The analysis of art works that we have done, allows us to elevate the level of contemporary Arab artist ownership of the world artistic currents and his ability to melt and incorporate them into the field of Arabic calligraphy of a manner that allows this art to be immersed in globalization while bringing him back his specificities bearers of significances and particular aesthetic and ethical values.

3 / Although influenced by the culture of globalization and Universalism, the works of contemporary Arabic calligraphy still keep their Arab identity and Islamic character.

4 / There is no reason to worry about the potential influence the culture of globalization and Universalism of the Muslim arts in general and calligraphy in particular because this art is far from being swayed with a negative influence by Western culture whatsoever . Muslim art is able to absorb the culture in its own sphere so it gives it an additional beauty.

5 / Arab Muslim artist exploited globalization in a positive way for his own benefit and even for the benefit of the Islamic art. He was able to present his work to the world through specialized artistic sites he created on the international web network - Internet -instead of contenting himself with exposing them locally in the limited spaces, of the galleries and museums.

6 / Globalization is a reality that it would be counter- productive to reject it all. This is a current that started by economy and then spread to politics and culture . This is a tangible reality and truth that we cannot deny.

2/Recommandations:

The researcher recommends the following:

1 / Do not be afraid to open up to the world culture. This study has shown that globalization has positive aspects that we can exploit for the benefit of Muslim art alongside other negative that we can control. This attitude is more productive than the absolute rejection of the culture of globalization.

2 / Teaching culture of globalization in institutes and universities specialized in the arts and arts education, based on the conviction that it is a modern and contemporary means of cultural communication with the other without abandoning so far, the need to preserve the social cultural and moral identity of Arab society .

3 / To carry out more studies and researches to better define the influences of globalization on different domains of Muslim art in order to draw the negative and positive aspects of it, to better correct them or reinforce and cultivate them.

4 / To positively exploit the contribution of the world network of communication. -Internet - which offers data to the learners and to the researchers in order to more consolidate teaching and training and thereby ensure that this instrument contributes to the emergence of creators capable of inventing and innovating in different scientific and artistic domains.

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The stream of creativity between reason and soul

Mohamed Kamal

Introduction:

Human diversity is obviously the backbone of the creation of the universe with all its sensory and intuitive demonstrations and this is what enriches life mechanisms, through a spherical earth based on the difference of geographical features which in their turn lead to the obvious differences in the accumulated historical strata from one nation to another.

Accordingly, we notice that man has this passion for discovery to which God predisposed him and carries him to explore the unknown through reason and heart.

Reason is based on the sense of hearing, sight, touch, smell and tastes, in addition to its ability to classify dispersed mental data, whereas the soul aspires to the immense field of intuition, by overcoming inaccessible ramparts of reason, with a transparency sometimes able to transform, dreams, impressions, expectations and inspirations into reality.

Sometimes the reason precedes the soul in the intellectual operation and vice versa, so they can work together in the exploration of mysteries, but they certainly cannot do without one another . The role assigned to these divine gifts is so controversial between nations, that intellectual choice varies from one person to another, between rational theories and spiritual philosophies , mental speculations and religious certainties, to the extent that history has become like a stream of creativity overwhelming humanity, with reason and soul. It was from this intuitive balanced human vision, that the relationship between the two fundamental poles of history , East and West , have been developed.

However, all unbiased researchers are unanimous as for the pre-eminence of the East in terms of scientific achievements and creativity and as for its pioneering role in the evolution of the world .

Most of them recognize its contribution in the introduction of civilization in West, the modernization of its concepts and its emergence from the dark tunnel in which it lived during the centuries of darkness.

Our point of view is less biased on our "oriental" identity than an objective reflection determined by a well established historical and documentary method, an abstraction made of the legitimacy of tendentious position stemming from a rooted oriental heritage which we cannot rid ourselves of , especially that we have published, in this sense, a work entitled Wahj Achchark (The ardor of the East), in which we treated the historical and creative differences in the picture, between the East and the West, on the two axes; of the affluent and the product. In other words , we are going to adopt clearly, at a time, the neutrality of reason and the partiality of soul. Indeed, every text asserts its belonging to a nation and reveals its historical, geographical and religious aspects .

In spite of the critical situation through which the Umma currently undergoes, was and is still governed by the same vertical relation systems, at different times of history, in addition to the colonialist bulimia well anchored in the Western thought, we remain convinced that the East/ West relationship consents to the dialogue among civilizations, to the polemics of creativity and to intellectual emulation. If the East wants it and renounces its arrogance and its presumption in favor of rationality and common sense. It is up to history and human achievements to judge !

In spite of the current events which prove that the clash of civilizations dominates the international scene, we will , in the limited context of this survey, trace in the most conciliatory manner, the tracks of human nature of the controversial dialogue in order to reach a creative language within the space of the picture, that is based on dialogue and exchange of ideas, not on gaps and exclusion as the Other does to his scheming, his delusion and his refusal to acknowledge the plundering of the intellectual and artistic wealth of the East. It goes without saying that we are going to lean on historical facts, proportionality (the relativity) of the picture and the basis of identity, in such a way to pave the path for the flow of affluents that the stream of creativity carries along between reason and soul.

Art Genesis, from a historical point of view :

Researchers unanimously consider, that during the Neolithic , art had first had a utilitarian function related to the man's needs before witnessing an aesthetic purpose. Thus, the flint was it used in its raw state before being modified and refined in the Paleolithic era to finally change into the polite stone in the Neolithic age and to constitute the starting point of the primitive art. At this level , the picture was used according to some beliefs that endowed it with supernatural power to hunt evil or to warn of danger.

Thereafter, in the Eneolithic Age, they used some minerals instead of stone, until the day where Egyptians came down from the plateau toward the Nile stream while leaving hunting for agriculture. Driven by a great meditative impetus, they wanted to probe the depths of the universe and to know its amazing architecture. At the same era, they view to draw features of the East through faith in the resurrection , judgement day and the interest granted to the intermediate life. Gods statues intercessors appeared and they began to discover the BÂ soul in its relation with the KÂ body, convinced of the inescapable reintegration of the soul in the body after their separation. Interest in the afterlife and the unknown was at its height. There was then a first real attempt to establish a bridge between the visible and the invisible world through the pyramid whose structure explains the relation to ascending energy between the earth and the sky.

This spiritual structure probably constitutes the basis of the later Oriental arts. The examination of its architecture shows that the pyramid is composed of a squared basis from which rises four tilted triangles toward the summit, that meet in a point named ‘’primordial mound ‘’, having the shape of a more reduced square than the one of the basis. It therefore explains the proportional variation between the shrinkage of shape and the intensification of the ascending energy. In the same era , in the fourth and fifth dynasties, it appeared what was called ‘’pyramid texts ‘’, a sort of impetuous development of religious conceptions of the king’s person before becoming widespread, later, to the whole people.

These texts, also included the practices that have been found later in the revealed religions, among these, the washing of dead bodies, the removal of corpses, the burial, the baptism and various worship rituals that gave more ardor to the representations of the invisible and to the conviction of its existence. At this turning point, Egyptians discovered writing, whose signs were like symbols and Chinese writing too and some Hindu and Japanese linguistic families. These peoples are pillars of the Oriental culture which is based on the significance of the signs on paintings and drawings more than the alphabet. In this respect , we should mention the invention of printing press and the engraving by the Chinese, to the second half of the 9th century B.C, because it is a great stage in the history of art .

During this stage, the West had not begun its itinerary again in the domain of the creation whose first signs would appear in the second half of the Eighth century before J.C, with the Greeks who were influenced by the civilization of Ancient Egypt, by the funeral ceremonies and the mythical representation. When in the year 666 before J.C, they penetrated in Egypt under Alexander the Great’s command, that tried to come closer of the Egyptians religion through Amun, there was what we would call a ‘’ religious pact ‘’ through the union of Osiris, God of Egyptians, and Dionysus, God of Romans, a union

that was crowned by the birth of Serapis. We would like, at this point, to mention the presence of dialogue in this era in spite of the fact that the Greeks were the conquerors and that they forbade to the Egyptians the military service . But they were conscious that religion was the pillar of Egyptian culture. Later, it will have the same role within the Oriental civilization in its whole. Shortly after, the Greeks changed aims and became interested in the culture of reason and to its potential in the exploration and the unknown's disclosing . It clearly appears in their sculptural and pictorial representations that are still like a springboard for the Western artistic conceptions, while starting with Polykleitos and Phidias to arrive to Michelangelo, Leonardo Da Vinci , Rafael, Edgar Degas, Rubens, Ingres and many others among those who relied on body language and its tempting relieves, including breasts, buttocks and genital organs, with a huge worry for the most meticulous material details that conform to the Western social mutations. Even when it appeared on the scene, the church had appeared obstinate and authoritative, what is more it had illogically separated, the soul of the body. All this had generated opportunist practices as the inquisition and the traffic of the indulgences.

Mutations of the instinct and foundations of the faith :

On the other hand, the Oriental thought has been the natural extension of its roots. Indeed, while the whole zone had been permeated with the Greek culture that had been based, with a lot of originality, on imitation and that had been seduced by the visible and the lure of the limited visual landscape. It has resulted in an unexpected return to the sources of the East, with the advent of Christianity, that restored the magnificence of the soul and the inescapable resurrection and the last Judgment. Followed up by a struggle between this religion and Roman heathenism that had inherited it, more or less all Greek ideas, among others, the no - belief in resurrection. Despite this, there were a lot of converts who rallied to Christianity under the effect of dialogue or by free conviction. Based on this, we saw emerging in the Eastern world, new artistic processes that had a tight relation with a long anti-Christian times, as the inlay, foliage, floral motif, fruiting, the rounding , the squaring off, stippling, levelling, carvings of the arabesque and other combinations of shapes that expressed the aspiration to the absolute. In addition to iconography as a natural result of the new religion separate from the iconography of Western Christianity that tends to depict the body and focus on its finer details, although both views are based on the miracle of the birth of Christ and his crucifixion, from the point of view of Christian dogma. This is a qualitative difference between the two conceptions, Eastern and Western, about realities that are one and the same, which emphasizes the need for circular dialogue, stream of creativity that swamp in his rotary motion, the faithful with the essence of reason and soul.

Muslim arts through the centuries:

In the extension of the religious itinerary mentioned above , the Muslim religion that appeared in Saudi Arabia in 610 of the Christian era (to the first third of the seventh century), it did not have its own art and did not pretend to separate or to disown what had preceded, nor to have its autonomy in relation to the past. Well on the contrary, the prophet Muhammed (Peace be upon him) was anxious to specify that his message was the coronation of other previous messages and that in his quality of final prophet, he just carried on a prophetic itinerary that others had begun before him . For this reason, Islam had started the dialogue as soon as he undertook the conquest of the neighboring territories, first Palestine and Syria in 632, then Iraq in 637, Egypt in 639 and finally Iran in 642. Naturally, Muslims had borrowed a lot of the art of the these countries and had even kept the creative flavor of each of them..

Consequently, it would be necessary to review the formula in use of ‘’ Muslim arts ‘’ and to speak rather of ‘’ Muslim art ‘’ of Egypt, Iran, Iraq, etc. In reality, at the prophet’s birth (Peace be upon him), Saudi Arabia was situated in the confines of two empires, Persia and Roma. The struggle of the new conquerors against these two empires would carry on until the conquest of far away horizons of the two sides, East and West. It has been confirmed that the Muslim religion didn’t fight the autochthonous religions of conquered territories but protected them, and it preserved and respected their dogmas as well as their goods and properties. From the Umayyad reign (661 to 749), a real interest was granted to a specific artistic heritage. When in 661, the caliphate was transferred from Koufa to Damascus, the Roman empire spread of the West side towards Spain and the coastline of the Atlantic ocean and the East side is northbound of India and borders of China. In the Umayyad era, dialogue about creativity was set up with the Other, when the Umayyad established relations with the Christian Roman civilization and Byzantine of Syria and Egypt on the one hand and on the other hand with Persia that were present in Syria and in Iraq, and this because the territory was under Byzantine domination when the Arabs conquered it to the above mentioned dates.

The territories in question had kept many artistic elements of the pagan Greeks and Romans and as well as some Sassanid features , considering the relation with Iran. At this turning point, creative dialogue with the Other was fully in force , similar to a stream in rotation between the filters of reason and soul. Despite religious and geographical constraints, the new religion had immediately chosen to build on the accomplishments of the other, rather than being hostile to him. During the Umayyad era, in particular, the arts began to shine, starting by assimilating achievements of the Other. The architecture, especially mosques, experienced a remarkable evolution, taking advantage of Christian

art of Syria at the time of Caliphate Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, with the construction of the Dome of the Rock, considered one of the most important achievements, and also the Great Mosque of Jerusalem, the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, the Mosque of Sidi Uqba in Kairouan and Azzaïtouna Mosque in Tunis.

The design of the Dome of the Rock reveals, through examination, a resemblance with some churches of Syria, among others the church Saint Jean of Jericho that was built in Constantin's palace, in the shape of a circle inside a square plan. Besides the church of the ascension that was constructed in the 9th century in the Mount of Olives, in Jordan, according to an octagonal plan inside of which was a circle surrounding the rock from where Jesus had taken his ascension to heaven. As for the domes, they were already known in Syria when it was conquered by the Arabs who found there some churches at the domes made of wood. Otherwise, the mosaics discovered in Madaba, in Jordan, prove that the city of Jerusalem was conceived according to a circular plan. Some aesthetic elements, that were not known before the Islam had been introduced in the architecture of the mosque. Thus it is some of minarets that seem to be an imitation of the towers annexed to the worship places of Syria and whose design had gone through Egypt during the reign of Muawiyah, and also of the concave Mihrab and the Minbar, considered like aesthetic and utilitarian elements, known of the churches before the mosques. Concerning the palatial, architecture it has been historically confirmed that the Umayyad in the power had exploited the Roman palaces in ruin, which were on the verge of the countries and the road in the desert, after restoring them.

Yazid Ibn Abdelmalek had thus made to restore Qasr Al-Muwaqqar and had made it the palatial center of the desert .Besides the Umayyad had built the palaces of Qasr Al -Hayr Achcharki, Qasr Al Hayr Al -Gharbi, Mchatta, Tûba, Al Mafdjar and Al-Minya, on the Byzantine model and by Byzantine masons and engineers. In the extension of this creative way, the architectural decorations made of mosaic were influenced by the Byzantine art. The decoration of the Dome of the Rock is one of the oldest adaptations of vegetable ornamentation made from palm, pine, acanthus leaves and various fruits such as grapes and pomegranates. It should be noted that most of the ornamental processes this era were an imitation of Greek and Byzantine art and also Hellenistic and Sassanian arts but with changes that took into account the new religious and social necessities.

The fascination for arts of the Other spread to pictorial paintings, ornamentation on the stucco, engraving on wood, shaping of metals and other arts, major or minor. At this point of our survey, it seems obvious that it was the Umayyad who crystallized the real features of an art likely to the new religion, while pounding on achievements of the others but with a tool of inspiration similar to a filter that proceeds by deletions and additions to achieve a creative production based on the dialogue and not on discredit and erasure.

The Umayyad school was thus a melting pot of heterogeneous, Roman, Byzantine and Persian arts, all gathered in one mold thanks to which the Islamic art acquired a new physiognomy that influenced all territories under the reign of the Umayyad .

We deliberately covered this era, because of the general opinion of the scientists, it represents the cornerstone of this newborn art that became a matter of dialogue and not of a clash of civilizations.

The itinerary of Muslim arts persisted in various regions, during the first Abbasid era, in Iraq, the North of Africa, Egypt, Iran, to Khorassan and Afghanistan, in all domains: architecture, stone and wood sculptures , pictorial painting, ceramic, art of the book with the calligraphy, gilding, e illustration and bookbinding, in addition to textile in all its varieties. The relief was taken then by the Tulinids, the Buyids , the Samanids, the Ghaznavids, the Ilkhanids, the Timurids, the Mamluks (Bahrites and Burjis), the Safavids, the Ottomans and so forth until the real features of arts had well consolidated in various territories and to the different times of the Muslim reign. These arts had drawn the best of the achievements of the Other, by means of the appropriation that aims to assimilate the imported product and to filter it through the spongy surface submitted to the constants of the identity that is based on historical, geographical and religious incentives of which the thirst for creativity is stemmed from reason and soul**.**

Gateways of trade, conquests and expeditions:

As we show tolerance towards the Other, in terms of thought, religion and creativity, he also should get in tune and accept the principle of mutual influence, because it is really an inescapable historical truth which has been concertized through many gateways the most important of which were the ancient trade routes. Egypt, for example, established many commercial relationships with its neighbors on all sides.

This activity, from the time of the Ptolemaic and the Romans became prosperous through the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean and the seas of the Far East to China. Regarding terrestrial networks, the most important were the road that ran along the coasts of Saudi Arabia as far as the urban centers of Mashriq , and the road of the island that joined Antioch to China by the Khyber pass and which included some branches towards Persia, Bactria, the Pamir Mountains and the Tarim Basin. In the same order of ideas, in the year 166 of the Christian era, took place the first diplomatic expedition between Rome and China. Getting back to business, European, merchants after a long six-month stay in the vast country of the East, returned to their country and related to their compatriots things seen and heard. The contacts between East and West also was by sea, via the Cape of Good Hope. On the other hand, the Islamic conquests had ample marked the West, reaching the shores of the Mediterranean and the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean.

The Arab invasion of Sicily then Apulia and Calabria left obvious traces in artistic and cultural domains. Thus the Arab style appeared in palaces and mosques constructed by Arabs and Muslim engraving and ornamentation were also exploited in the decoration of Cappella Palatine, built in the 11th century in Palermo, in Italy. Arabs as well as the Western borrowed from Persia the horseshoe arches known as Gothic art. The Gothic art has also borrowed from the Arab architectural forms of minarets built according to a square plan supported by an octagonal part, above which is a circular part.

Most churches were built on this model. In 1063, the city of Pisa, which was allied to the fleet of Genoa to expel the Arabs of Sardinia and that had helped the Normans to seize the Arab Sicily, began building its silver cathedrals tapping into the spoils been usurped to the Arabs. Since the fall of Palermo, European architecture has been radiant with the aesthetic heritage of Arab art. Andalusia, with a population composed of Goths and other Western backwards and North African Berber, knew, more or less eight centuries, from 711, a period of prosperity and splendor of all life aspects , notably of art which, thanks to its flexibility and flavor of its simple rhythm, exerted its influence on the Renaissance, German and European art, as revealed by the Alhambra Palace, the Great Mosque of Cordoba and citadel Giralda. We should also mention that Avicenna, as a philosopher, shone on Andalusia and later on in other countries. Muslim styles were preserved in Spain in architecture and manufacturing art objects even after the decline of Arabs and the fall of Granada in 1492.

The Muslim influence was also well visible in Toledo, through ornamentation of churches, textile manufacture and the engraving on wood. The Palace of Seville, especially, could brag about the Arabian architectural beauty. As for the Crusades (1095 -1294), they deeply marked the relation between the East and the West that went through a big crisis in the beginning of its colonialist countries. History shows, indeed, that the incentives of the Crusades were economic and non religious as one pretended it. Thus, in the 27th of November 1090 , in Auvergne Clermont in the south of France, the Urban II, before a crowd of Christians gathered in a large courtyard, began his preaches fed of hostility against Palestine by a description of the deplorable situation of the Catholic church, misery and underdevelopment prevailing in Europe. The Religion served as a pretext in Europe to plunder the treasures of the East, that is to say its objects of art, palaces, jewels, libraries and its monuments.

Since then, the transfer of Oriental art toward the West began, especially textile and materials, besides the imitation of various artistic styles as arabesque, decoration with geometric motifs and engraving. In addition to the Crusaders adaptation of an Oriental use that consisted in covering the summit of the fortresses with stones, a style which can be noticed in the citadel of Leernes in Belgium and the fortress of Roudel in Germany.

The Gothic architecture, in the cities of the south of France, Italy and Sicily, was in the 11th and 12th centuries fed of Muslim architectural elements. In this respect, we notice an imitation of Muslim styles such as flatness and architectural geometric shapes in the Christian art of Europe. After the withdrawal of the Crusaders and their departure from the East , trade routes were reopened and the transfer of works and objects of Oriental art to the West became more intensive.

A thorough examination of what we have reviewed, shows that Muslim art is a kind of melting pot that, deliberately and with a competitive spirit, knew how to take advantage of the arts of predecessors Persians, Chinese, Iranians, Egyptians, Romans Greeks and Hindus. It then assimilated them in a very specific aesthetic mold that has been developed throughout the chronological evolution and social dynamics. Thereafter, the Western influence was exerted again, for the previously mentioned historical reasons, what consolidates the idea ,that the artistic relation between the East and the West is essentially a dialogue among cultures, in spite of the concealment of this notion and the absence of such an intention for different periods during which the colonialist expansion overrode tolerance. It was the case during the Crusades and later campaigns against the East, when the English, the French and the Italian started sharing the territories greedily and without scruples. Despite all this, the lure of the East , in the modern era, keeps on exerting its influence on the former colonizer and the interactive art impregnation as a stream, continuously flowing under the control of reason and soul.

Manifestations of mutual influence:

Though, from a methodological point of view, we are tempted to see a qualitative difference in the perception of the universe and its mechanisms, by the East and the West. There is also a difference in the incentives of the development of paintings ,in both parts, on philosophical and historical plans.The East tends to lean on the strength of the soul and its unlimited capacity of exploration and discovery, whereas the West is based, since its creation, on the reason and its permutations and complex combinations.It also considers the balance that has been between the reason and the soul on a lot of historical axes of which we mentioned some. We feel the need to further clarify some events that alternate phenomena of borrowing and influence..

In the Mahayana era , India had been conquered by Alexander and established a relation with Greece. Buddha's statues became more gracious and looked like those of the Greek God Apollo. Brahmanical Gods had their thinner features and were draped in gorgeous outfits, like the Greek Gods. Whereupon the Indians feared the destruction of the spiritual characteristics of their sculpture and they returned to the original styles by giving primacy to the spiritual aspect at the expense of rational specific details.

It is then when appeared, in the district of the Mysore, a type of statues in stone that

represents Buddha's spiritual features through the congealing of movement, the fixity of the look , and the psychic sweetness that results from abstinence and aspiration to the salvation of souls.

As for the influence of Egyptians on Greek thought, it appeared through numerous depictions of Gods and Goddesses that Greeks worshiped as Zeus (God of sky) and Aphrodite (Goddess of beauty). During a certain period , still under the influence of Egyptians, Greeks believed in the intermediate life, which had been reflected in the field of sculpture, through the colorful wooden statues and marble statues in profusion in the Archipelago . A stock instance is , the statue of Artemis, made by a sculptor from the island of Delos, on the Xoana model, and very close to statues of ancient Egypt.

Concerning the industrial arts or what some researchers refer to as'' minor arts'', namely inlay, jewellery, ceramics, manufacture of tents, hammering copper, wood processing, traditional costumes, etc. We have above mentioned bilateral influence of which they made the topic . The influence of arts is still exerted today, just by having a look at its repercussion on Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) whose cubist painting was marked by the Andalusian art, more especially by the school of'' Ain'' Attair. Henri Matisse (1829-1954), was , much more impressed by the Oriental arts whose principle is flatness, lack of the third dimension and tendency to decoration , engraving and plant ornamentation, which is illustrated by his two paintings: '' Rumanian shirt '' and '' The Grand Atelier''. This influence can be explained by his trips to North Africa, especially Morocco, and the interest that he granted to Persian sketches. The work that Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) made at the end of the nineteenth century, in Tahiti, carries , to the level of implementation and the notional content , marks of the Wassiti Yahia Al Baghdadi works that had been made five centuries ago .

On the European side, the impressionist movement in the late nineteenth century, led by, Renoir, Sisley, Pissarro and Monet, exerted its influence on the work of the Egyptian Youssef Kamel, the Syrian Michel Kercheh, the Lebanese Jamil Al-Kaisar , the Tunisian Yahia Atturki and the Iranian Fayek Hassan , in the first half of the twentieth century. European Impressionists were marked mainly by Japanese art. Oriental artists of abstract art, expressionism and surrealism were influenced by European and American representatives of these movements. Examples illustrating the interaction between East and West are countless, we have chosen to focus on a few to emphasize the inevitability of intellectual permeability among men, all disconcerted categories, permeability of which God made the backbone of the universe structure that will carry on keeping its aesthetic strength through the itinerary of the creativity between the reason and the soul.

The Lost compass in the current relationship:

It results from the previous presentation, a certain number of historical truths, the

most important is the artistic exchange between East and West, at various periods. This exchange was sometimes encouraged by the peaceful relation that shows before and again today trade routes, sometimes by the natural consequences of conquests, invasions and military campaigns. Despite this, the artistic creation remained sovereign on the throne of humanity.

Thus, its action was only confirmed afterthought , at the time of its filtering on the geographical, ideological and social plans. It also confirms another truth which consists of qualitative differences between the two sides at the level of motivation and the final creative product. Nevertheless, the mutual influence is still active on both rational and spiritual areas, which has led to the concrete manifestations of a real dialogue between the two cultures through an internal cognitive music that echoes another exterior music which generally emphasizes the human receptive field.

It is then, probably, a denunciation of simplistic theses of globalization that soldiers of the world defend while tempting to erase the culture of the Other without a real knowledge of history mechanisms that we have mentioned repeatedly . The world structure , in deed, was based on diversity and difference, to enrich this human mosaic. It goes without saying that the peoples yearn for their accumulated and subdued identities to geographical constants, successive rhythms of history and ideological laws.

It is therefore difficult to undermine these entities to the profit of a unitary hegemony made by anxious powers to confuse the issues and to compel the peoples to their repressive depictions, if these powers realize their creative poverty and their cognitive incompetence.

For this, the author of this study who is proud of his Arab tradition and Eastern family, is not against dialogue and cultural exchange based on well established human basis but stands by his compatriots with whom he shared the country, the history and dogma against piracy cohorts who aspire to plunder and havoc much more than a free intellectual debate that respects the values and characteristics of nations. Tenacity in the trenches of resistance is undoubtedly a pure Qatari impetus to fight against the submission which will end soon.

But the issue that arises, is to know what is the right path that the nation and the entire East must follow to find the missing compass in our current relationship with the West's vertical perception of the Other, his pride and wild conceit, all the more with its extensive industrial revolution that dominates much of the art world. The answer , underlying in our presentation, lies in a return to the historical, geographical and ideological constants that make the history of the nation and predispose it to be the equal of the Other at all levels, military, political, social, cultural and creative.

It is only at this moment that we will really move from the field of consumption and

the negative reception of the achievements of the other, to the creation and invention that must be submitted to patrimonial criteria , which would enhance the modernization and conscious development.

We will be then capable of producing this intellectual and spiritual mark, equal to the West that will necessarily put an end to its regular colonialist ambitions, all the more if it feels in the Other strength and determination, so that the source of the creativity resumes its rotation and swamp the human earth, fed of wisdom , reason and soul illumination.

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Islamic and Western Arts, Clash of civilizations or dialogue between cultures?

Ismail Abdallah

« The Clash of Civilizations » is a concept introduced by the American writer Samuel Huntington in his ١٩٩٣ article published in the quarterly « Foreign Affairs » Magazine in the USA. Later on, it was further elaborated in a major 1996 work titled « The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order». In this work, the author states that the future conflict between nations will be cultural in nature, neither ideological nor economical. Huntington calls the Western countries, by virtue of belonging to one civilization, to establish a relationship of solidarity and cooperation with the USA, in order to confront other civilizations, namely Muslim, Chinese and Hindu.

Some intellectuals and strategists of other countries and civilizations, immediately countered this thesis and opposed the Huntington›s concept, promoting « Dialogue among civilizations and cultures ». According to them a relationship of dialogue, not conflict, should be specifically established between the various nations and among humanity in general. Muslim and Arab intellectuals were the most strident fervent in spreading the new, counter concept, taking into account the recurrent insinuations of Huntington, which implied that Muslim Civilization is more hostile to the West than the rest of the world. The current intervention is part of these attempts to bring into being this new concept. Within the same context, the activities of the International Seminar were held under the framework of the 7th Doha Cultural Festival in 2008.

The present written survey is entitled « Muslim and Western Art: Clash of Civilizations or Dialogue between Cultures? », in other words, is the relationship between Western and Arabic (or Muslim) civilizations antagonistic, in accordance with Huntington thesis, or is it on the contrary dialogical since it represents Arabs and Muslims ?

The term « Muslim Art » refers to the Art of Muslim world, that is to say, Arabs, Hindu, Turkish and Persian arts, without being necessarily uniform in terms of shape, pattern or content. Each of these Islamized cultures managed to stick to specific elements

of its secular tradition.

The purpose here is not to give a step-by-step history of the development of Muslim arts, but rather, to display a succinct presentation of some patterns and specific domains, particularly in the manufacture of colored pottery and porcelain, out of which Arab pottery and earthenware , metal artifacts, especially those in bronze, which are ornamented with highlighted inscriptions have been developed. These artifacts are mainly kitchenware, jugs and candelabra. In addition, there was the splendid woodworking that was earlier characterized by a Muslim mark through the inlaying of mosaics and nacres, ornamentation and epigraphic designs. Furthermore, the architecture and the decorations allowed the Muslim artist to accomplish Mihrabs and Domes and to raise fine and sophisticated Minarets. Based on these simple materials, Arab artists have demonstrated a great deal of creativity in raising edifices, monuments and castles of great beauty.

It is undeniable that Muslim civilization would not lead to these artistic achievements without contributions from their non-Muslim predecessors. History of civilization dwells on the interaction between peoples and the benefits gained from the overall human accomplishments. Thus, the artistic and creative output would not materialize irrespectively of the artistic achievements that were adopted from previous and neighboring artistic movements. This does not imply that the pre-Muslim civilizations were the only source that Muslims drew from. Quite the contrary, Islam as a religion, was the primary artistic inspiration. In architecture, the starting point was the first House of God, the magnificent Kaaba : « Indeed, the first house (of worship) established for mankind was that at Makkah- blessed and guidance for the worlds. » , says Surat Ali Imran (Family of Imran), verse 96, of the Glorious Qur›an. This humble edifice was a sanctuary around which Arabs performed their ritual walk, or circumambulation, before Islam. Since the era of the Prophet Abraham, the Kaaba has become the only place to which Muslims gather from all over the world, in order to perform pilgrimage, or Umrah, and the ritual circumambulation around the Kaaba. At God's command, the Kaaba is also the direction to which Muslims turn during their prayers. Likewise, God ordered that mosques should be raised according to his teaching, in the Surat Al Nur (The Light), verses 36 and 37: « (such niches) in mosques which Allah has ordered to be raised and that his name be mentioned therein, exalting him within them in the morning and the evenings, (are) men whom neither commerce nor sale distracts from the remembrance of Allah and performance of prayers and giving of Zakah. They fear a day in which the hearts and the eyes will (fearfully) turn about. »

Because of their significant religious and secular role, these mosques needed the utmost care in terms of architecture, in addition to special attention to the decoration, the ornamentation and the building of minarets. Architects and artisans, in erecting marvelous

domes, have used stone, marble and alabaster of the highest quality in order to magnify the experience for the believers in their prayers. Splendid mihrabs and minbars were built in to service to the religion. As far as decoration is concerned, the architects chose patterns and ornaments made up of colored and gold-plated mosaics.

Regarding the metal artifacts, the Muslim artist was inspired from the Muslim soul, based on the following Koranic verses: « They will be served by immortal boys, with cups and jugs and a glass from the flowing wine. », surat Al Waqiah (the event), verses ١٧ and ١٨. As well as in Surat Al Insan (Mankind) in the verses 15 and 16: « and there will be circulated among them vessels of silver having been (created) clear (as glass), clear glasses (made) from silver of which they have determined the measure. ». According to/ With respect to furniture and fabrics, artist's designs were originated from the description of heaven, as in Surah al Ghashiah (the Big Ordeal), verses13 up to 14: « There will be raised couches, and cups set of hands, and cushions arranged and carpets spread out. ».

In the field of sculptures and engravings, Muslim artists drew from Surah SABA, in which Jinns are subjugated by God to the service of prophet Solomon: "They made for him what he willed of elevated chambers, statues, bowls like reservoirs, and stationary kettles. [We said], «Work, O family of David, in gratitude.» And few of My servants are grateful." (Verse 13).

To classify Muslim arts, some researchers have adopted reparation based on the effect of these arts on the senses, quoting the sacred word of God in the verse 36 of Surah Al Israa (the Night Journey): "And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - about all those [one] will be questioned."

According to the adopted classification, there was thus:

- Oral arts such as music and songs that affects the hearing and that the ear perceives.

- Visual arts that includes all that is impressive for the sight and that the eye perceives, sees and contemplates like arabesque, architecture, drawing, sculpture, illuminated manuscripts, painting, the art of colors and the art of gardening.

- Audio-visual-emotional arts: these are the arts that are perceived both by hearing and sight that arouse also the emotions. It is the case as for the Holy Qur'an recitation and following/according to the subsequent saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): "Everything has an ornament and the ornament of the Qur'an is the sweet voice".

- Complex arts which include religious or popular singing and music like art of storytelling, epics, Maqamats and folktales, in addition to arts of gestures like folk dancing which illustrates the heroic actions in peoples' life.

As for Western arts, it includes every creation produced by Western artists in Western

countries, without taking into consideration the environment and the language, namely Italian, French, German, English and American etc. Researchers classified these arts according to six categories which are theatre, music, architecture, sculpture and dance. The numerous Western artistic creations have undisputedly fascinated other civilizations and served them as inspiration and source of borrowing, especially the artistic production which stands out as aesthetically of high value. Within this framework, it would not be exaggerated to say that Western arts are currently making progress thanks to the patronage and to the protection they profit from.

Chapter 1: Trace of Muslim arts in European civilizations:

According to the quasi unanimous researchers' point of view, the influence of Muslim arts on European began with the Muslim conquests then carried on during the Crusades and via the commercial exchanges. Andalusia was the interface of Muslim and European civilizations. That is where Arabs had established their artistic traditions in various fields like architecture, decoration, sculpture, calligraphy, painting and many other arts. These traditions will serve as a pattern to follow for different European artistic styles. The settlement of Arabs in Sicily and certain parts of the Balkan Peninsula contributed to the spread and the transfer of Muslim Arts across the Western world.

1) Architecture:

Features of Muslim arts are evident on the facades of buildings in Europe such as those of Spain, Italy and France. These patterns are seen in windows, doors, arches and curvatures. These features are not only restricted to buildings, they also appear in churches and Cathedrals and across arches, pillars, capitols and pattern of decorations. For instance, one of the doors in the Saint-Pierre -de –Rhedes Church in France displays ornaments and inscriptions following the Kufi calligraphy. Likewise, on the Door of Cathedral of Puy, in central France, we can read the following inscription: "Al MulkLillah" (All sovereignty belongs to God) in Kufic script, which is a pattern where the calligraphers demonstrated their ingenuity.

We used to say that architecture is the mother of all arts as the art of theatre is also the father. Actually, the architecture includes construction, sculpture, painting, calligraphy and decoration. Like all arts between which there was an exchange, Muslim architecture first borrowed from the Hellenistic Civilization which influenced reigned , before Islam, over Western Europe, Eastern Mediterranean region and all territories which had been under Roman dominance. Then, it acquired its own characteristics reflecting the essence of Muslim thought. Later, Muslim civilization paid its debts toward its predecessors . That is how during the Middle Ages it was able to establish its own different style of architecture,. The leaders and artists were captivated by this civilization, its architectural

arts and decorative styles. Such an exchange is not surprising as in the Middle Ages there was an interface between the Middle East and Europe. This was during the Muslim rule in Andalusia and Sicily which its influence was fruitful for Europe in various artistic fields, and others. Likewise, trade provided an opportunity to meet with the Western Christians who visited the region, particularly Palestine, and took home with them Muslim artworks. There were also some privileged relationships during the Crusades and others established later on between Europe and the Ottoman Empire.

The impact of Muslim arts on the West is manifested particularly via its adaptation of Iraqi architectural styles. During the Ninth Century, the Emperor Theophilus, for instance, sent one of his ambassadors to study Muslim architecture in Bagdad. In 835, next to the gates of Constantinople, he had built a palace that was similar to the ones in Bagdad and its gardens also were designed like the Muslim style. The same impact can be seen also, after the fall of Andalusia, in the Cathedral of Zaragoza which was built during the era of Mudéjars (Twelfth Century) by a Muslim community who were working for the Christians. This cathedral was built out of bricks, all the gates were arched and the tour looks like the Minaret of Andalusian mosques in North Africa, in particular, the mosque of Qairouan, its decoration was made out of bricks and "icicles".

In certain regions of Spain, especially in the south, we can find, even today, the Muslim styles that inspired Gaudi, which represents the Art Nouveau, by various artistic elements that he used in the decoration of rooms and the facades of edifices.

In Italy, the influence in question is evident in the arcades adjacent to Saint-Angelo dome in addition to Rufolo Castle in Ravello, which dates back to the Eleventh Century and which has architectural details attesting to its Muslim origins. The city of Pisa in Tuscany is famous for having the broadest range of beautiful architecture, among which we can mention the Dome Tower in Cielito, which is so much like the Minaret of Sanger Al Guli in Cairo. The dome and the base of the Prato dei Miracoli Cathedral is another testimony to this Muslim influence. In the north of Italy, the Casale Monferrato consists of galleries in which the arcades comply with the norms and the bases of Muslim Architecture. We can compare this structure with the dome overlapping the main gate in the Mosque of Cordoba, bearing in mind that this part was built during the second half of the Tenth Century, near the beginning of Muslim rule. The south of Italy was no exception, as we find traces of Arab architecture, not to mention the Renaissance-era Bell Towers which are built much like the Maghreb Minarets.

The Italians were equally captivated by one architectural method which was popular in Cairo at the time of the Mamluks. This method consists of overlapping horizontal keystones with alternation between dark and light stones. Such technique was used on the facades of edifices in marble built in Pisa, Florence, Genoa and other Italian

cities. This same type of multicolored construction is found in the Auvergne region and the Saint Peter church in Northampton.

The Muslim Influence is also detected in Secular architecture, particularly in certain small castles with upper rooms arranged around a central courtyard. The most important of these castles is the Zisa, near Palermo. Sicilian fortresses bear the Arab Muslim stamp on the Syrian art, too, in their design, in the doubled arches and archery. This Arab style of citadels and fortresses crossed from Sicily to all the European countries and was borrowed by the king Frederic II during his expedition to Jerusalem.

In France, the most representative monument of Muslim Influence is the church of Saint Madeleine d'Aiguillon, in which the gate and the polychromatic multicolored external walls display an imitation of the Great Mosque of Cordoba. The Abbey of la Madaleine, Vézelay, which was restored after the fire of 1120, is considered as the most beautiful French edifice because of its polychromatic arches of Muslim inspiration. The marks of Muslim art are also evident in the region of Puy, in southern France, in the polylobed arches, the decoration drawn from Kufi Script and plant ornamentation in the form of palm tree weaves. Some French architectural styles are adaptations of Egyptian and Syrian fortresses. Thus, the entry way that connects the fortress gate to the inside of the building is designed according to a right angle plan, of Zangentor type, and also in chicane, in order to prevent the enemy from seeing the inside of the courtyard or reaching the people inside it with their arrows, starting from the gate. It is in this same way that the castles that were built in the Fourteenth Century and their entries are like the main gates of Qasr Al Hayr Al Gharbi in Damascus and Al Ukhaydher in Iraq.

The gates were framed by two turrets surmounted by archers and perches pikers that allowed the firing of arrows and the pouring of tar and boiling oil on the attackers. The gate and the turrets were also topped by spy holes and cornices.

Concerning the Arabs Influence on European architecture, Batissier wrote: "one cannot doubt that Eleventh and Twelfth Century French architects borrowed important elements of construction and decoration from the Oriental art… Would not we find on the most revered Christian monument, which is the Puy Cathedral, a gate marked with Arab inscription? Are there not crowned Arab-inspired fortresses in Narbonne and elsewhere?" This Muslim Influence is found in Great Britain, in Kenilworth, where one of the gates which dates to 1150 is made up of a keyhole arch in a rectangular frame, this proves that the architect must have visited Spain. He is almost certain that the Tudor styles of arches are of Muslim origins. The metallic and English bars and grills seem to be an emulation of wooden Arab Musharabiehs and one can notice also that Muslim decoration holds a big role in English edifices. In Poland, in the city of Lobow, the ninth century Arminian church is decorated with Muqarnas, Arabesque and clover-leaf ornaments,

near the broken arches, dating to the Ninth Century in IbnTulun Mosque, at al Qatai in Egypt. In addition, the Goths used ornaments of stones with inlaid glass in the space in between, in the window decoration. In Bulgaria, what betrayed Muslim impact was buildings 'design, with a full arch and the facades with porches. The Nineteenth Century Saint-John monastery in the city of Rila, attests of this influence, which we notice also in Ottoman domes and in the method of alternating bicolor stones, black and white, known also as "Ablaq".

Thus, it is also proven that the arches of these buildings have Arab-Muslim origins which Arabs have built in the Ibn Tulun Mosque five centuries before its emergence in Europe. Émile Prisse d'Avennes, a French archaeologist, Egyptologist, architect, wrote about the topic: "It was from the Arabs that the Christian borrowed these great towers which up to the end of the Sixteenth Century were very useful to the west". In fact, when visiting Seville, we can notice that the castles and the houses are still built according to the Arab style. It is sufficient for us to hear the acknowledgments of the Arab influence from orientalists themselves. In his turn, in his book entitled "the Arab Civilization", Gustave Le bon eulogizes this impact and goes on to say the following: "In addition, one should not forget that Europeans of the Middle ages hired many foreigner architects, toward which they exercised an inspirational role only similar to that exercised by the Arabs on the Byzantines. These architects came from all over the world. Charlemagne brought many from the Middle East". These are some examples that attest to Civilizations' cooperation and the use of aesthetic aspects of artists and architects wherever they are. This exchange of beautiful styles is glorified by art historians and architects from the Middle East to the West.

2) The Art of Calligraphy:

The Arab calligraphy is inseparable from other Muslim arts, which are the architecture, the decoration and the art of drawing. Its beauty is displayed in the ornamented manuscripts decorated with gold, which according to the reference books captivated the Europeans who traveled to the Maghreb region and Egypt. It was the same for Paul Klee who passed on some Arab graphic styles into abstract features in his works of art, especially in his painting entitled "The Mosque's Gate". Likewise, many other artists like Macke, Moilliet and the Austrian Rudolph Swoboda in the painting "The Al Rifai Mosque", he shows his intense attraction to Arab graphic art. Among the painters who gave this graphic method various shapes and turned it into a decorative process, we can mention Duccio, Giotto, Ghirlandaio and Fra Lippo Lippi. In his painting "The Virgin Consecration", the latter have lavishly ornamented the garments with ribbons printed in Kufi script. According to Muhammad Hussein Judi, calligraphy is not exclusive to the art of painting; it is also used by sculptors. For instance, he mentions the artist Verrocchio,

who inspired Leonardo DA Vinci, and who bordered the outfit of the Prophet David in his bronze statue with the same name with ribbons decorated in Arab script. It is fair to say that the Arab script is so important and beautiful that many nations borrowed the Arabic alphabet for the transcription of their languages; namely, Turkish, Farsi, Urdu, Kurd and Afghan.

3) The art of decoration:

Muslim decoration was introduced into European art thanks to architects who were inspired by Arab graphic signs, which they used in a lot of frescos and archway inscriptions. Great painters like Rembrandt, Picasso and Leonardo DA Vinci also used Arab decorative patterns. Thanks to Spanish art, a specific decorative style was spread in Europe under the name of Moorish art, a method akin to vegetal ornamentation, foliage and Oriental offshoots. The same type of decorative foliage is also found in the art of rug making which was developed later thanks to the trade in rugs from the East, and also on castle gates in Italy, France and Great Britain. The great European artists like DaVinci and Matisse were captivated by the vegetal and geometric patterns and were keenly interested in Arab decorative art and arabesque. The craftsmen in architecture and carpentry could not resist being influenced by this type of ornament, which can be seen clearly on the facades, gates and frescoes.

4) The Art of Manuscripts:

In the decoration of the Holy Quran, especially the whole page of the opening Surah, Al Fatihah, as well as the beginning of the following Surah, Al Baqarah, is considered to be the pinnacle of artistic creation among Muslims. Muslim Conquerors brought with them, during their expeditions, copies of the Quran, some of which are still found today in European museums. The decorative patterns of Quran, being colored and gilded, have inspired many European artists who replicated these clearly on the pages of their Western books. The ornamentation of the book covers and volumes, its engraving in hollow print, the gilding of titles and author's names using liquefied gold leaf in the field surrounding incuse lettering; all were Arab-Muslim art forms invented in Cordoba that were later transported to Sicily and Venice.

5) Works of Art:

The Europeans were fascinated by the fine quality of the works of art crafted by Muslims, works which reflected their creativity, imagination and attention to detail. Among these items were pottery, porcelain, glass, wood, ivory and metals, shaped into ewers, dishes, flasks, chandeliers, boxes (Maqsurah) and the minbars within mosques. Also, there were harnesses, fine cloth and rugs. During the Middle Ages, Muslim traders brought with them these artifacts which won the favor of kings, princes and the wealthy classes of Europe, and European artists were encouraged to emulate them. These traders

traveled all over Europe with their goods, which grew increasingly popular, spreading far and wide. The Europeans then introduced esthetic innovations to these artworks, blending Muslim and European styles into a new synthesis. The foremost Muslim art forms that captivated and inspired the West, were those worked in glass and metal. There were splendid vases, bowls, pots and vessels with sparkling colors, gilding, blue and red, brought from Egypt and Damascus.

6) Metallurgical Arts:

The clear advances accomplished by Muslims in crafting bronze and copper vessels not only fascinated the Europeans, but also encouraged them to imitate the shapes of items such as ewers. In fact, such metal pieces were widely used in castles of European kings and princes. During the Eighteenth Century, Venice was known for producing brass wares, in which vegetal and geometric patterns and figurative representations of human and animals, were inspired from the Arabs. The Europeans emulated the Muslim style, which consisted of alternating the back and the decorative surfaces, replacing the previously used silver wires with enameled glass leaves.

7) The Art of Textiles:

The fabrics produced by the Arab textile houses had a good reputation for their beauty, luxury and quality. They were embroidered with golden or silver string and adapted according to climate: hot, cold or moderate. The European workshops began to emulate the sumptuous silk fabrics imported from Arab countries, much as it had with other products. It was thanks to the Arab workshops established in Sicily that the Arab fabric was spread. As a result, Italians learned the secrets of textile manufacturing, which they transmitted to their many cities. During the Fourteenth Century, their fabric was distinguished by the Arab features found on their ornaments and inscriptions.

"Arabs' Influence and Islam on the European Renaissance", edited by UNESCO in Cairo in 1978, is a book detailing the various fabric names, originating from the Muslim towns which had strong reputations for fine textiles. For instance, the cloth known as fustian stems from Al-Fustat; damask from the city of Damascus; muslin from the city of Mosul; baldachin from Baghdad, and Grenadian from Granada. Also, the name tapestry stems from Al-Tabiyya, in the region of Baghdad.

The reputation of Muslim carpets shared the fate of their textile products. The fine pieces made in Muslim countries, particularly in Persia, were craved in the castles of Europe. After thoroughly studying the works of the great Western painters, we can observe that their paintings include fragments of Islamic carpets. For instance, industrial advancement in Italy, even more so in Holland, could not hide the persistent Arab-Muslim decorative influence of carpets.

Chapter II: The Influence of Western arts on Muslim Civilization.

Researchers consider that Muslim art has been open to influence from the rest of the world, through various cultures, in that it has widely borrowed into all the arts. These cultural sources can be cited:

- The Pharonic art of Egypt, which made the ancient temples of Egypt famous,

- The art of ancient Mesopotamia, through which the Sumerian, Babylonian and Assyrian civilizations acquired their fame,

- The Art of ancient Greece

- Roman art, which has characteristics drawn from Greco-Roman sources as well as Syrian, Persian and Egyptian ones.

- The Sasanian art of ancient Persia, which its architecture is distinguished by huge buildings with stone columns and marble.

According to a Muslim saying,'' Wisdom is the quest of the believer who seeks to get it wherever it is.'' Muslim artist is supposed to draw from the source of beauty, regardless of place and time. Muslim architects, archaeologists and painters paid much interest to Western art, from which they borrowed some components that would enrich the Muslim art or civilization.

1) In architecture:

For such a long period, the Muslim (especially Arab) countries have been under Western domination and have thus followed many aspects of the Western civilization. Likewise, they have also been highly influenced by Western technological and scientific development, which touched, however unevenly, architecture and other fields. The best illustration of the emulation of Western architecture was probably the use of modern construction materials. Hitherto, Muslims favored clay for the construction of their houses, as this low-cost material was more compatible with their environment. Subsequently, Arab and Muslim builders in the have borrowed reinforced concrete from its place of origin, Europe and America, thereby arousing great controversy among the supporters of the Arab-Muslim heritage, who denounced the use of reinforced concrete and iron. According to the latter, the excessive use and eventual landfill of these materials adversely impacted the ecosystem and economy. It has been said that the residues of buried concrete, owing to the chemicals it contains, could be harmful to the soil and the overall environment. Furthermore, modern science has proven that these materials are likely to cause many serious diseases if present in significant concentration. Defenders of these construction methods reject these findings, arguing instead that concrete is a

natural material extracted from the earth itself, being composed of cement, gravel and sand, and that it symbolizes advance compared to clay. Leaving aside the controversy, let us acknowledge the irrationality in denying the advantages of reinforced concrete in the strengthening of pillars, walls and ceilings. If it was ever scientifically proven dangerous, scientists would logically strive to invent other materials or find some way to solve problems caused by the use of concrete. Certainly, it would not be easy, especially in the short term, because our society would not easily accept a substitute for concrete, not to mention other controversies and the persistent support for the use of concrete.

The Arabs also borrowed from the West the pattern of sloping roofs. In many Muslim cities, tilted and sloping roofs can be seen alongside flat roofs. Over time, such a landscape has become common. Another example of borrowing involves the glass towers that have invaded Muslim cities, even those cities which have long preserved the Arab-Muslim style, so this type of tower can be seen alongside simple cubic, flat-roofed structures, which had long been ubiquitous to cities of the Arab-Muslim world for many generations. This reality can be seen in the holy city of Mecca, where skyscrapers share space with the very House of God, the Kaaba. Erected by Abraham, its name literally means "cube".

1) **The Art of Painting:**

In Arab and Muslim universities of arts, the schools of fine and applied arts were, undoubtedly, strongly influenced by the methods of their counterparts in European universities. Regardless of their diversity and their origins, trends found in Western art schools, whether Italian, French, English, German or American, are taught side-by-side in Arab and Muslim art schools.

The life and work of the great Western artists such as DA Vinci, Picasso, Van Gogh, Rembrandt and Salvador Dali are included in the students' curriculum in Muslim and Arab countries and are taught by Arab and Muslim teachers. This is because Muslim artists, in general, irrespective of their nationality and religion, are only concerned with the aesthetic aspect of art, regardless of its source, and simply interested in using it in their works of art.

2) **In Archeology:**

Western techniques of archaeological excavations are among the methods of exploration in which both Arabs and Muslims were interested, so that almost every Western state prompted scientific expeditions, especially French, Belgian and Danish, for the needs of local exploration. These outsiders managed to unearth archaeological artifacts that had been inaccessible even to indigenous people. Many Muslim countries have sent their young people abroad for training and internships in the field. These students, in their turn, have transferred the Western methods and schools in their countries, which has been

very useful in discovering hitherto some unknown archaeological features. Likewise, these European efforts were of great benefit in the discovery of artistic vestiges, namely coins, porcelain and other handcrafts, sometimes along with the remains of whole towns from lost civilizations, strewn beneath the rubble. The excavation techniques that were borrowed from the West had been unknown to the Muslims and Arabs; without them, much of their history would still be lost, hidden beneath layers of earth.

3) **The Art of Design:**

Before addressing the influence of Western art upon other cultures, including Muslim and Arab, let me first explore how some Muslim scholars interpret the artistic vision in the West. These researchers believe that the isolation of art in collections such as those of museums is basically a Western invention. Muslim culture does not separate the fine arts from the field of industrial arts, that is to say, the vast array of ordinary manufactured goods. According to these researchers, art of museums is essentially held in isolation, which is one of two methods utilized by Western civilization in its handling of art; other method is that of classification. There exists two kinds isolation: one consists in separating the "other" -- the hateful -- which is hateful of the "I" -- the beloved. This kind of isolation manifests itself in the prison and the psychiatric hospital, and it is also illustrated by the classification of men and nations to "civilized" and "less civilized." The other form of isolation consists in separating the whole beloved (the "I") from the "other", the hateful, to be set aside into museums and palace gardens. The museum is a prison for the beauty, the beauty that we want set apart from the "other", the reprehensible creature which cannot appreciate its value. In fact, the Western conception of art is nothing more than an induction of the Greek view of the universe, which classifies people into two categories: gods and barbarians, in other words, the superiority of the "I" over the "other", the sub-human.

It seems that the point of view of these researchers with respect to the Western conception of art, is that it is merely a philosophical point of view of its Greek authors. It is based on the doubt rooted in some Muslim minds against the West, and it finds its justification in historically fixed positions that the Westerners had adopted against "others." But the construction of museums for the preservation of the arts, and the acquisition of works of art in the rooms and gardens of castles, may not be seen as an isolation of beauty; rather, it is a form of preservation and elevation of art. As a proof, all the world museums are open to the public, regardless of their social class or country, at an affordable price, to offset the cost of acquiring, preserving and displaying works of art. Let us imagine, for example that there are no museums, what would be the result? It would undoubtedly lead to the deterioration of the artistic achievements and a waste of a large proportion of the hard work and the lives of nations and peoples. If the isolating aspect of

museums were a fundamentally Western concept, there would be fewer museums in the Muslim world, and states would have little cause for taking pride in having museums, given that the proliferation of museums is an indication of artistic and historical wealth. If we try now to set out a comparison, one would realize that, in the West, works of art are often displayed in places frequented by ordinary people, such as markets and other public spaces.

Considering, for example, the trappings of modern lifestyles, being furnishings, household tools, appliances, means of communication and transportation, clothing and furnitures, one will find that Western influence is pervasive in the Muslim world. The cars running on our roads, trains that connect our cities, airplanes flying in our air, mobile phones, TVs that we acquire in our countries, all of it carries the Western footprint in its design and creation. The Muslim world has, in its embraced of Western manufactured goods, thereby invalidated the view that Western art is historically based on isolation.

5) Opera, operetta and theater:

Opera, operetta, theater, music and the art of singing are among the most difficult audio-visual arts, which can be considered the most pleasant and widespread arts. The emergence of the operetta, in its present form, took place in the sixteenth century, with the formation of the Camerata Fiorentina, which included musicians and poets whose aim was to revive the Greek tragedy and learn the manner in which Greeks combined music and singing with theatrical performance. One member of the Camerata was the singer and composer Vincenzo Galilei, the father of the great astronomer Galileo Galilei.

In 1600, “Eurydice”, the play written by Italian musician Peri, was first performed. Eurydice was performed again at the wedding of King Henry VII of France to the Italian princess Marie de Medici. The story line revolves around the myth of Orpheus, the fabulous singer, and his beautiful wife Eurydice who died from a snake bite. Orpheus follows her to the world of the dead where, displaying his musical gifts, he seeks to have its guards send her back. Softened by Orpheus’s talents, the guards respond to his wish, under the condition that he promise not to look at her before coming back to the world of the living. He does not keep his word and, in the original story line, Eurydice is returned to the world of the dead. The end of the play was rewritten with the inclusion of a happy ending. In 1607, Claudio Monteverdi composed “Arianna,” his first opera, which was followed by another, “Orpheus”, in 1608.

In the monthly Arts Kuwaitis magazine, published by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, the Syrian art critic and researcher, Abdelfattah Kalaâdji, reported in a historical survey that the lyrical arts was introduced from Italy to England in the Eighteenth Century. They began to translate some Italian operas in English until in 1710, when the German composer George Frideric Handel came to Hanover to direct the

musical troupe. He had studied the art of opera in Italy and had composed ''Agrippina'' in Venice. He later moved to London where he became a staunch defender of Italian opera. In 1711, he gave a performance of the opera of '' Rinaldo'', which was distinguished by captivating music and bewitching scenes. Then the art of opera began to expand from its original birthplace, Italy, the rest of the world. The first theater in the Muslim world was built in Egypt in 1798 by the French expedition and constituted a source of inspiration for many poets who wrote musicals. This was the case of Ahmed Shawki, author of "Cleopatra" (1929)," Majnun Laila" (= The Crazy About Layla) in 1931," Qambiz" in 1931 and the following plays were performed in 1932 "Ali Bey Al-Kabir" ," the Princess of Andalusia", '' Antar" and "Essit Houda" (= Madame Houda). Opera flourished in Egypt and the first opera house in the Arab world came into being in Cairo.

In the Nineteenth Century, Italian and French theater companies went to Damascus, Aleppo and Beirut to give performances of musicals, a new step in the influence of the art of Western opera on Muslim civilization. Having attended these performances, Abu Khalil Al-Qabbani went to Egypt and Damascus, to introduce these operettas:"Naker Al Jamil" (The Ungrateful)," Uns Al Jaliss" (kind table companion)," Wallada Aw Iffit al Muhibbin" (= Wallada or chastity lovers)," Harun al-Rashid and Ghaleb Ben Ayub"," al kut Qulub" (The food = of the hearts). Operettas had captivated playwrights and the public much more than opera. Although the contribution of Qabbani did not fully comply with the Western standards, it was able to contribute to the footprint of the Muslim operetta, wherein there was singing, religious "Muwashahats", '' Samah '' dance, which was performed exclusively by men during the sessions of '' dhikr" in "zawias" and Sufi mosques. The origin of the name "Samah" (permission) is explained by the fact that this dance was tolerated in conservative circles, as it was characterized by modesty, decency and was free of any tendency to debauchery or immorality.

In the wake of Qabbani, we find his disciple Sheikh Salama Hijazi and his troupe. Hijazi had produced theatre pieces interspersed with songs such as" Shahidat Al Gharam" (The martyrdom of love)," al Alborj Mail" (The Leaning Tower), Romeo and Juliet, knowing that the last play was written in 1595 by Shakespeare and it was adapted as an operetta, first by the French director and musician Hector Berlioz in 1839, followed by his fellow musician Charles Gounod in 1867. The recovery of Romeo and Juliet by Sheikh Salama Hijazi can be regarded as a cooperation between Westerners and Arabs in theater and operetta. Later, Saied Darwish gave representation in the following parts: "Shahrazad". "Al Birika" (The wig)," Al Ishra Attayïba" (The good-natured relationship). However before him, a native musician from Aleppo called Chamber Camille (1892-1934), began his musical studies in Aleppo before leaving for Italy to learn Western music. He worked also in the field of opera in America then returned to Aleppo, then went to Egypt in 1913 to head up the company of Najib Al-Rayhani for whom he wrote three

Theatre plays following the model of the operetta, which is a kind of musical comedy, namely: '' Halawa wa Humar''in 1918 and ''Ala Kifak" (as you like) in 1920. He then came into contact with Amin Atallah and wrote a number of operas. He was different from Qabbani as he studied operetta rigorously in the art form's birth place. What is more, he considered the music and singing as a fundamental part of the performance. Among his musicals were the following: " Al Founoun Al Jamila" (The fine arts)," Okbel Andokom'' (May you know the same festivities)," Al Gharib Al Bais'' (The miserable stranger)," Shahr Al Assal (Honeymoon) and eventually "Annunu"(The baby).

In the early 1930's, the poet Omar Abu Risha and Ali Addarwish and the musicians Ahmed Al Ibri founded the Musical Club, of which the best musical performance was: " Dhi Qar" by Omar Abu Risha. The latter continued to write musicals in verses and published the following operettas:" Attoufan'' (the Flood) and "Adhab" (Suffering). In the mid-1940's, the output of music was prolific in Aleppo. The troupe "Dounia Attamthil" gave three performances of musicals, respectively "Al Karitha" in 1945 (The disaster) "Doumou" (Tears) and'' Attadhhya'' (The Sacrifice). The most extensive musical experience was that of the Rahabani brothers, Assi and Mansour, in Lebanon. Currently, almost all the Arab or Muslim countries do have this art form, at least during national and cultural festivals. Right here in Qatar, the National Council for Culture, Arts and Heritage opens the Cultural Festival in Doha with an operetta beautifully infused with Qatari folklore. In the fifth celebration of the Festival in 2006, the opening performance was of the operetta May and Ghaylen, drawn from a folktale and developed and directed by Abderrahman Al Manai. The above is also a legend, passed on since antiquity in Qatar. It has been the subject of many storytellers and has been authenticated by researchers in the field of folk tales.

The events of the story take place in the region of Al-Khor Mahenda, where a man named Ghaylen lived and had many dhows. He devoted himself to his work as a pearl diver without being troubled by any competitor until the day when a dreadful female competitor by the name of May appeared on the scene. This bold woman had inherited her father's knowledge of the sea and the pearls. She also had a large number of boats and a team of strong, skilled seamen. When the speed of her boat exceeded those of Ghaylen, it annoyed him and he begged her for a towing, to which she replied sarcastically: "the rope is in the minds of paddles." In those days, they used row boats to fish for pearls. Ghaylen was beaten in the race to the pearling grounds by May. Someday, while he was sitting in thought and wondering about his destiny, he saw a grasshopper flying. He grabbed it and began to ponder about his ability to fly. That's when he had the idea to build a triangular sail fast enough to transport him to the pearling grounds ahead of his competitors. This operetta tells a Qatari folktale of singing weaved to music, combining the authenticity of the past, the happiness of the present and the hopes for the future.

Thanks to the outstanding success of popular operettas, the National Council for Culture, Arts and Heritage repeated the performance at the 6th Cultural Festival of Doha in 2007. The first performance of the operetta ‘’ Earth and sea’’ was at the festival inauguration and it was written and directed by Saad Bourshid. This operetta combines the two factors shaping culture in Qatar, namely the countryside and the sea. The topic of the operetta is about a country boy who falls in love with the daughter of a captain whom he asks for her hand in marriage. But the cousin of the girl is against this marriage and attempts to hinder its plans by telling the suitor that, because his beloved is the daughter of a captain, her dowry should be commensurate with her status. He told him also that there exists a large pearl at the bottom of the sea and that he should find it by diving to the depth of the sea. The cousin thinks it would be impossible for a farmer, having no knowledge of the sea, to do so. But the young lover accepts the challenge and confronts the waves and hidden dangers of the sea, proving himself an outstanding diver. He finds the pearl and offers the dowry to his sweetheart, thereby demonstrating the strong will and determination of his countrymen.

Chapter 3: Role of Orientalist Art in the Dialogue among Cultures:

Orientalist art is a Western art which its themes are rooted in the East. Although it has its roots in Western literature, it is likely that historical events are the main cause behind the migration of many European painters and explorers to our world, and particularly in the eastern countries of the Muslim and Arab world. The first of these events was the French expedition led by Napoleon Bonaparte in Egypt in 1798 and continued until 1801. It was not only a military expedition, it was also a scientific exploration. In fact, Napoleon was accompanied by scientific and artistic commissions composed of 165 members, among whom were engineers, scientists and painters. They were equipped with a printing press capable of working with Arab script. It was the first printing press to be used in Egypt, now known by the name of Bulaq, on which was published a large number of books and magazines.

The scientists of the expedition had composed a book entitled ‘’ The Description of Egypt’’ which constituted a synthesis of the collective work of the team. Some consider this exceptional work as the best that has been published, on the one hand because of its magnificent pages and on the other hand because of the fair and complete description of the reality of Egypt. The French had also founded an academy of sciences, the Institute of Egypt, like the Institute of France. The order for the foundation was issued on the 22nd of August 1798 and the motto chosen for the academy was ” progress and cooperation.” The aim was to work for the progress and development of scientific research in Egypt and also for the integration of Eastern culture into a Western scientific culture. In clearer terms, the

academy's mission was to activate the dialogue among cultures. The subjects addressed by the members of this institution were related to mathematics, medicine, economics, arts, literature and music. The order stipulated that the Institute publish research results once in every three months. The academy had also formed a committee charged with archaeological excavations and set up a library containing the most valuable books, which had been brought from Europe, or acquired from the mosques of Cairo and from the houses of the Mamluks. The library opened its doors to the public on a daily basis.

Among the historical events that attracted Western artists in the East, there was the uprising in Lebanon against Ottoman rule in 1821, which culminated in the proclamation of independence in 1830. This eased tensions between the Ottoman Empire and Europe led to the gradual establishment of diplomatic and economic relations between Turkish and Europeans. At the same time, Turkish contribution to the arts via participating in the World exhibitions in Paris, London and Vienna shed light on the beauty of Muslim architecture and grandeur of the Muslim religion. Henceforth, religion, culture and Muslim architecture formed the favorite themes of the Orientalist paintings.

Three geographical areas were associated with Orientalist art. The first includes Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Lebanon. These were the main target of the Orientalists, because of the significant historical events that marked these regions. Travel to this area often led artists also to Rome and Athens. It was also considered to be an essential journey to the career of any artist. The second direction was the Turkish heart of the Ottoman Empire, given the reputation of Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire, which later took the name of Istanbul. This was where sultans and their harems, luxurious markets, magnificent palaces and historical monuments embodied objects that left little need for artistic imagination on the part of the painters. Thanks to its geographical position and its traditions, this capital was considered as an interface between East and West. It was, indeed, a focus of Oriental culture much as Venice was the center of Western culture. The fame of this capital is explained by its relationship with ancient Byzantium, the semi-legendary city of which every traveler has tried to find in the Istanbul of his own time.

The third direction of Orientalists concerned regions of North Africa, that is to say, Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. The French occupation of Algeria in 1830 made the trip to the region easy for its painters. Among them, there were some who were part of the scientific, economic and military expeditions which missions were to explore Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia and the ruins of their ancient cities. The long period of French colonization can explain the artistic influence of these regions and the weight of cultural figures who had visited them. Among the Orientalist artists who had traveled to Algeria were Picasso, Matisse, Renoir, Macintosh and Kelley. Although most of them have spent a short time in this region, they absorbed most of what they observed and were

deeply influenced. Two important examples of this appeal to the Maghreb that are worth mentioning. The first is that of Jacques Majorelle, who spent most of his time in Morocco to paint the beautiful houses of the Atlas Mountains. His work summarizes the essential features of modern painting in the Eastern trend. The second example concerns Etienne Dinet who perfectly mastered the Arabic language. He had also converted to Islam, had made the Pilgrimage and had taken the new name of Al-Hajj Nasser Eddine Dinet. He made his home in the village of Boussaâda, in the south of Algeria, and never stopped painting the daily life of Algerians. He quickly adopted their culture and began to defend their cause. In his career, Dinet progressed from at first being captivated by the East, to being totally assimilated by it. He is considered one of the best artists to have depicted the East, doing so in a precise, accurate manner.

The journey to the East was exhausting and dangerous, not to mention costly, marked by the lack of safe roads and exposure of travelers to diseases. Usually, the departure was from one of the Mediterranean harbors, but first a shipping boat to North Africa, Alexandria, Egypt, or the Palestinian coast had to be found. As for the journey towards Istanbul, it was typically overland across Greece. The preparations for the journey took a long time and it was not easy to acquire the needed documents. Some books were indispensable, among them that of Louis-François Cassas that was published in 1799, or the book Picturesque Travel to Constantinople by Melling, published in 1802, and especially The Description of Egypt, which is the book written by the scientific Committee that had been part of the French expedition to Egypt.

Whoever undertook such a trip had to prepare its effects and take with him a large supply of the essentials, such as sketchpads, pencils and watercolors. Most of the time, while on site, the artist could only perform sketches or watercolors. Later, the oil paintings on canvas were made in the artist›s studio, once returned home. It was, in fact, almost impossible to take the oil colors on these long trips due to the complexity of their preparation and their use. The oil painting could not be readily employed in situ until the invention of paint tubes, that is, towards the 1960's. Note also that the majority of the in situ paintings were small format.

In their book Charms of the East, Hubert Bari and David Lam wrote that the journey to the East was very expensive and, in comparison to the relative ease of today, the cost of a trip could reach ten thousand dollars. This high cost is what drove the artists to make many copies of the same theme in the hope of accommodating as many potential buyers as possible. It was one of the ways they use to offset the high costs of travel. Most Orientalist painters returned home, laden with souvenirs of the country they visited, like small pieces of furniture, light weapons, precious stones, inlaid and stylish jewelry and fabrics, with the intention of incorporating them into their paintings. The most fortunate

were able to undertake profitable business thanks to these trips. David Roberts (1796-1864), had the most success as he was the author of many watercolors that he had included in his book The Holy Land, Syria, Petra, Arabia, Egypt and Nubia, published in 1842. The book›s success exceeded even the author's expectations, who, thanks to his watercolor paintings, was asked to make many oil-based reproductions of the same landscapes. His journey to the East brought him fortune, fame and glory. It was, however, not the case for the most of orientalists who died in poverty and oblivion. It is only posthumously and recently that they were rehabilitated with the rediscovery of such orientalist art, that is towards the 1980's.

Reasons for Orientalist enthusiasm for the East:

The passion of Orientalists for the East can be explained by several factors and it is in itself a major factor in the Renaissance of literature, arts and Arab and Muslim monuments. This was thanks to the participation of foreigners in the study of our environment and the depiction of our reality.

Some Orientalists made profits, especially thanks to the support, by fundings and time, of their respective nations. Moreover, they may have had at their disposal well-supplied libraries with rare manuscripts and research works. On the contrary, others, especially the painters, had to personally manage a very heavy budget to reach the East. All spoke well a number of Western languages, yet Eastern ones were spoken, too, with Arabic foremost among them. Therefore, it was quite natural that their work is distinguished by the depth and interest in authenticity in the depiction of the reality of the country they visited.

Indeed, these Orientalists had facilitated the work of the Arab and Muslim scholars thanks to their magnificent paintings, dissemination of their valuable manuscripts with luxurious editions, authenticated and accompanied by rich comments, tables of contents that makes it easy for consultation, in addition to indexes that include people and places.

Intellectual and artistic productions, especially in pictorial and archaeological areas, had introduced innovations in theories and used the themes of history in their works. They were distinguished by qualities like proper exposure, devotion and comprehensiveness. The most important mark left by Orientalists appears in the Arab works composed according to the Western style. The most famous French orientalists are Sylvestre de Sassi, Prosper Marilhat Etienne Dinet, Eugene Fromentin, Gustave Guillaume, De Slane, Louis Massignon, Lévy Provençal, Louis Cassas, Eugene Girardet, Yvone Thivet, Jacques Majorelle, Leon Cauvi, Edward Legrand and Edward Doignau. From Germany, there are Freitag, Gustav, Flögel, Von Kremer, Theodor Noldecke, Brockelman and Gustav Bauernfeind. From England, Margelioth, Nicholson, Augustus Osborne Lamblagh

and Herman Corrodi. From the Danmark there may be mentioned Peter Peterson Toft , whereas Charles James Theriat and Edwin Lord Weeks from America are worthy of mention. Artists from Austria are Rudolph Swoboda, Ludwig Deutsche and Rudolph Ernst; from Belgium, Emile Derks; from Hungary, Goldzheir and from Holland Dozi.

The painters had discovered in the East a type of light almost unknown in Europe and that, combined with the natural landscapes that were alien to them, had made a radical change in their chromatic system . This was illustrated by the swapping of grayish colors compatible with industrial Europe for the East's warm colors generated by a generous sun. It was natural that in the middle of the green oasis, the desert would be the most exotic landscape and it was considered the lost paradise. It was also depicted on a large scale by a large number of Orientalist painters. The ancient ruins were also a favorite subject for painters since the rediscovery of the beauty of Roman civilization of the time of the Renaissance in Italy. It is this fascination that prompted explorers and artists to face the difficulties of traveling to the East.

The ancient ruins and Muslim edifices of Egypt, the Roman monuments in Syria and Lebanon and the Greek temples in Turkey, all this was a favorite destination for contemplation, inspiration, or even the glorification of the roots of European civilization itself. This attraction began with the discovery of the greatness of the archaeological vestiges in Egypt, following of the publication of the book The Description of Egypt which included pages illustrating some of the glory of this civilization. Some artists such as Louis-François Cassas and David Roberts had specialized in this kind of painting. Similarly, the journey to the East had become an extension of the famous Grand Voyage that every artist had to take his life. It was a kind of a spiritual journey that led to the cities of Rome and Athens, which were considered as the mother of all civilizations. But the new horizons and the most remote places of the earth allowed the artists to gain new insight in their quest for new sources of inspiration and crown their artistic career by exploring the historical city mentioned in the sacred books.

With the industrial revolution of Europe in the 19^{th} century the historical big cities such as Paris and London witnessed great transformations during which the ancient edifices were demolished to be substituted with new ones. Thus, the famous Baron Haussmann had he radically transformed Paris landscapes by destroying the medieval buildings, including the most ancient fortresses and monasteries, and replaced them by wide boulevards, public gardens and magnificent new buildings. These changes did not occur without eliciting conflicting reactions among the residents. The charm of old Paris was truly lost even if modernization had provided new facilities and improved health conditions. With the rediscovery of the ancient cities of the East, their fortifications, crowded streets and fine souks bustling with craftsmen, the painters could, in some way,

find the lives of their ancient cities. Cairo, Aleppo, Damascus, Fez and Algiers reminded the European caravans of yesteryear, when they were loaded with silk fabrics and spices, a throwback to the heroic era of the Crusades.

The amazement of the painters who emigrated to the East was not only due to natural landscapes, monuments and architecture, but also through the discovery of peoples whose clothing styles and traditions were alien to them and who were breaking completely with modernity. Observing the Oriental life style, Orientalist painters were provided with a broad scope, suitable for painting and portraying topics such as everyday life, rural life, crafts and small businesses. Bedouin life was particularly attractive for them. Fromentin, Lambloy Frere and Guillaumet were among the artists who were captivated by the desert, in spite of its aridity and sandstorms. For all these reasons and after the major exhibition of Muslim art, which was held in Paris in the late nineteenth century, the Muslim civilization gained more popularity in the West. Many painters had returned home laden with paintings depicting Muslims in the venerable postures of prayer or recitation of the Holy Quran. Both Austrian painters, Deutsche and Ernst managed to replicate the majesty and the atmosphere of Muslim and Eastern world. Thus, they made some of the most beautiful watercolors and oil paintings. The State of Qatar has in its collection a treasury of these works of the Orientalist's hand.

The most famous Orientalist works:

As we mentioned earlier, Western painters of the generation of Orientalists had visited Arab capitals to depict the almost hidden world, the almost overflowing deserts of sand and sunlight. In the capitals, the imagination was fertile and fed fantasies about the alcoves, harems, of odalisks dressed in Arabic glittering costumes and bold colors, who showed off their beauty and their apparent charms, not to mention the beautiful Muslim architecture of mosques and palaces. It is a depiction that combines the pleasures of this world, the magnificence of the afterlife, the mysteries of the desert, the secrets of the oceans and the history of monuments.

One of the most important acquisitions of the world is the collection of Orientalist works of art that the State of Qatar possesses. It owns two hundred paintings that reflect the characteristics of Orientalism, throughout its itinerary, since the early eighteenth century. These are the bright, colorful paintings, that are rich with beautiful natural scenery, ancient monuments, the style of Muslim cities and the exotic aspect of people's lives. One of the most outstanding paintings in this collection is the Al-Rifai Mosque, made by the Austrian painter Rudolph Swoboda, and which depicted a minbar, a mihrab and four faithful in prayer posture. He brought together many artistic elements, the most important highlights, on the one hand, the architecture of Islamic cities and all that was

implemented in the art such as stones, marble, decorated arches, inscriptions graphics, and the magnificence of Islam and worship services in different postures, standing, sitting or prostrate reciting the proclamation of faith on the other hand. This painting is the best orientalist creation, such that the experts of art never tire of contemplating it. To grasp its meaning, requires a long observation, precision and meticulous examination of the details. One can mention also the prostrate, painting of Etienne Dinet, the painter who had proclaimed converting to Islam in 1913 and had made the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1929. An artist like him could not have visited the Holy Land and made the ritual tour around the ancient house of God without bringing an artistic creation project.

The collection of Qatar also has the magnificent painting Jerusalem, circa 1902, executed by the German painter Gustav Bauernfield. It is a view of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, overlooking to an intense and dramatic landscape of the holy city, its buildings such as the Great Mosque, the Dome of the Rock, the domes and minarets of other mosques and Islamic and Arab architecture. It is a strong and faithful testimony of Arabism of Jerusalem. The third painting to mention in this collection is Damascus was made in 1882 by the Danish Peter Peterson Toft and which represents an overall view of the city from its Arab-Muslim architecture and square houses. The minarets and domes were raised high into the sky, as if they were serving as faithful guardians of the city. Also included in the same collection a painting done in 1882 by John Varley and which depicts a mosque and a street of Cairo, in addition to the amazing painting of Eugene Fromentin Arab Caravan, wherein we see camels loaded with goods, and horseback riders, all moving in the middle of a vast expanse of desert with wild vegetation and serene sky.

Among the finest masterpiece in which the theme is related to the souks of Cairo, there is a painting of Karoly Cserna, in which the lights are processed through the chromatic diluted basis and where we can see the gates out of their sleep when men and camels go by, leaving the impression of crossing time. We can retain from Victor Huguet the watercolor which features a procession of riders on a remote road between the mountains, and from George Randell the painting where a group of men in white outfit and wrapped in meridian light, were talking before a small tent.

The engravings by Thomas Allom (1804 - 1872) topped the list of Orientalist works and meet the standards of the first period of Orientalism. Thus, it reflects ordinary people's lives, through a comprehensive and accurate picture of the inside of the great souks, the old squares, the streets, the balconies of the houses, the domes which are distinguished by their design and their inscriptions, the drapers and carpet merchants displaying their wares at the edges of shaded streets and mosques that illustrate the splendor of the architecture. Orientalist painters were true to life and focused on the finest details to reflect the masterpiece of Arab-Muslim civilization through the sumptuousness

of palaces, mosques, Moorish baths and cafes. The importance of this lies in the precise and stylized depiction of beauty.

The painters moved between public places frequented by the natives dressed in their specific oriental costumes. The paintings reflected their fascination with the Arab artistic features, the energy of the lights coming out of the openings of high domes and minarets which were erected over the interior space and joined with the sun that slopes gently into the premises. These are some of the features found in the paintings of Gerricault, Joseph Hoffmann and George Double. Some paintings depict the Arab souks full of merchants and vendors, Bedouins from the countryside and deserts, riding camels loaded with goods. During the day, the walls are flooded with white light and shadows crashing violently to dive into the depths while the facades are decorated with mosaics sparkling with blue glitter.

Conclusion:

Based on the facts discussed in this study and taking into account the psychology of the artist and his predisposition to tolerance, it appears that there has never been a conflict between the Muslim arts and Western arts. Rather, these arts moved from the step of dialogue to that of interaction, alliance and cooperation. Thus, did the Muslim civilization borrowed from other civilizations, their art and then left its own mark. Other civilizations, including the West have even made loans to Muslim arts, in their form as well as their content, shaping them according to their environment and their principles. This interaction and exchange are still in force today. It is up to the organizations and top officials, who work for the establishment of dialogue, peace and mutual support among civilizations in the world, to engage artists and intellectuals and offer them the opportunity to further develop cooperation so that the slogan of" dialogue" or "alliance" of civilizations, a mere hope and a topic of political, economic and social discussion, becomes a concrete reality.

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Sixth Part

Calligraphy between past and present

Calligraphy between modernity and heritage.

Prof. *Mahmoud Amhaz*

Arabic calligraphy between the illusion of authenticity and the call to modernity. *Prof Sabri Mansour*

Calligraphic paintings : Essence and reality. *Talal Maalla*

Arabic writing and calligraphy : between past , present and future. *Yousri Al-Mamlouk*

Calligraphy - the Iraqi style. Living on the edges of the language, dying on its wide extents. *Farouk Youssef*

Calligraphy between modernity and heritage

Prof. *Mahmoud Amhaz*

The issue of calligraphy leads inevitably to another issue that has an evident and central position in our contemporary artistic culture, that is heritage and the interest it deserves, for identifying its fundamental traits and to recognize what it contains and subsumes as values that enormously contributed in the global progress of the civilization.

The return to heritage and the interest that we must attach to it, as a benchmarking base in elaborating a distinct culture have been imposed by the political and ideological transformations that interfered in the social life of different Arabic countries, in addition to the rising of the compulsory feeling to adapt with these transformations and to meet the requirements of modernity. Because this feeling which has predominated since the turn of twentieth century, involves the obligation to contribute in the building of a new pure culture which made it possible to take up the challenge that the West represents to our Arabic entity. So, according to one of the best pioneers of calligraphy, Jamil Hamoudi, drawing on the Arabic letter is the ideal way to confront the western influences.

The new issues related to authenticity ant to heritage preoccupy at present the artistic spheres and find supporters who defend and call to consider them as a principal lever to elaborate an artistic concept and express it artistically.

Thus, it is obvious that the adoption of such general theories leads to the birth of a new artistic movement overwhelmed by a clash between an Western artistic heritage and an eastern one. The first one has an artistic vision that complies with what is perceived by the eye, inside the scope of vision, the second has another conceptual vision, insensitive to the imitation of reality. So, it is a confrontation between an illusionist, three-dimensional plastic space to sensible and material connotations and a flat, bidimensional plastic space that expresses spiritual values and suggestions. In fact, the imitation of the visible world involving the material aspect of the work and the illusion of the "third dimension" remained integral in the western art, till the end of the nineteenth century. In contrast,

in the essential method of eastern arts, especially the Arabic and Islamic arts, the means of expression that are designed according to a flat and bidimensional scope tenaciously persisted (see A. Papadopoulous, 1976, p126).

The adoption of this vision, in the Western , by a group of artists at the end of the 19th century, represented a paradox. It was then enshrined by Henri Matisse and the representatives of the abstract art. Arabs also granted a special interest to these artists (from Delacroix to Van Gogh, and from Matisse to Paul Klee, Miro and Taybe), who had an admiration to the eastern artistic heritage, and had really contributed to overtake the Renaissance's vision and transformed the scope of the canvas to a flat and painted space. Because the contemporary Arab artists only moved to the abstract art, discovered the values of oriental arts and defended them when they witnessed some experiences of Western artists. By resorting to new techniques and to plastic concepts, these Arabs have been liberated from classic concepts and traditional academic standards.

Other Western artists such as Pollack, Toybe, Mathieu, Hunderwasser, Proustel, … who found some kind of a esthetic satisfaction in the intertwining of the lines and their accumulation , conducted their experiences in of abstract arts passing the borders of their traditional locan culture, in order to discover the arts of the Far-East, of the Arabic and Islamic world and of Africa. They discovered in it different and unusual aesthetic values. This evolution contributed, with regard to the sources of inspiration used in the plastic art, to the transformation of the concept of Western painting and its painted space for a screen making a beautiful part of what was marginal in the Western's view, like the lines and the various decorative forms. So, as the art developped toward the abstraction and renounced in parallel from the visible world, the concept of aesthetics changed. The artistic truth didn't lie in the mimetic loyalty, but in the creative activity itself. The pictorial matter was not necessarily related to visibility, Mr Michael Devrine affirms, it exists in itself and for itself, according to its own reflection; its form never gives a content that it goes beyond, since it has an immanent content.

In the meantime, while the Western artist was turning his attention to the East, seeking whatever was suitable for his tendencies and enabled him to set free from a past of which he had been dragging the chains, the pre-fifties twentieth century Arab artist was inclined to another direction. The best he aimed for was travelling to Europe to discover the artistic monuments, especially those of classicism, and get acquainted with the secrets of the imitative art as practiced and perfected by the Western, since the Renaissance. He wanted to study there the academic foundations, hoping to get inspiration from them in order to master the art of drawing and painting, in accordance with the standards of mimicking nature. Thus, this was the Arab artist dream, that did not have anything to do, at this era, with the world of Picasso and Braque, or those of the wilds and impressionists,

but related to Raphael, to DA Vinci and other great classical artists.

Despite this Western evolution, since the end of the 19th century and the early 20th century, and towards an overpassing of the traditional art, the first Arab artists remained confined to classicism and general academism based on mimetism. Even though their works could sometimes borrow a little bit from impressionism or from symbolism, or if they paint faces and local landscapes, they lost interest in the conceptual transformation of the pictorial canvas of the Westerns at that time. They remained insensitive to the metamorphosis that these movements brought with them aiming to overtake the artistic model whose foundations went back to the Renaissance. In this respect, they adopted a neutral and sometimes disapproving attitude.

This neutrality toward the contemporary artistic movement caused the emergence of the writings of some artists such as Gibran Khalil Gibran. These ideas reflected some way of thinking that represents the Western (traditional) culture as a model to follow (see My memories with Gibran, 1979, p21). Certainly, the attachment of some Arab artists to a classic past, that was strange to them, has its own reasons. The modern artistic movements still were far to be well known outside Europe and were not away from bitter criticism, even in Europe. They were sometimes controversial topics, persecuted by the Nazis and unknown in the Soviet Union where the art academies still remained attached to the pre-1917 Revolution traditions.

At the very beginning, the renovation in the Arab world was limited to topics about the need to return to the local traditions and facts. In fact, some Arab artists dealt with popular topics, paint landscapes and figures from their own countries. Some Lebanese people like David Al-karam, Habib Sourour, Khalil Salibi, Mustapha Froukh and Omar Onsi painted portraits and landscapes from Lebanon, with a classic and sometimes impressionist style. The Egyptian Ragheb Ayad, has, for his part, dropped out the eastern paintings in favor of populist works. Another Egyptian, Mahmoud Mokhtar (1891-1934) and an Iraqi, Jawad Salim (1919-1961) tried to get inspiration from the old arts of their countries, of Pharaonic arts and of Sumerian and Babylonian arts.

In spite of their importance, these first trials remained limited. What lured, at this time, the Arab artists (Mustapha Froukh, Omar Onsi and Cézar Jamil) were the impressionist works whose colors, light effects and techniques were admired by them. They found here an overtaking of classic criteria and concepts and they satisfied their ambitions. However, a radical evolution took place at the beginning of the fifties of the 20th century, within the frame of an artistic movement, concerned to be in the middle of the contemporary Western movements, to imitate them and to be aware of the changes made in the global artistic concepts. Thus, a disparity of works by artists of this era reflected this global tendency and participated in the establishment of different artistic

movements, oscillating between realism and the extreme abstract plasticity.

What was known in the Arab world as : calligraphy, formulated an artistic movement whose characteristics were determined at the start of the fifties of the 20th century, and have generally created concerns about authenticity, modernity and inspiration drawn in heritage. The goal was to look for a one kind specificity, thanks to individual experiences of Arab creators who held exhibitions later in their countries. Nevertheless, the calligraphic movement has only been devoted with the publication of a book about the "unique dimension" and the inspiration of the art drawing on the letter, which represented the slogan of the exhibition which was held in Bagdad, in 1971. It was a manifesto book that united the studies which determined the objectives and the horizons of this movement whose writers were Shakir Hassan Al-Said, Jamil Hamoudi, Dhia Azzaoui, Rafa Nassri and Abderrahmane Kilani.

The avant-garde trials in this domain were the work of many Arab and Iranian artists seduced by the aesthetics of the Arab lettre and the idea to make from them a plastic material that is essential in painting. The ten years following the World War Two have witnessed, in many Arab countries, the first experiences aiming to explore the plastic values of the letter. They were embodied in the paintings and the theoretical texts of the Iraqi Madiha Omar and the paintings of her compatriot, Jamil Hamoudi. The latter have made from the word transcribed on the canves a new element in the pictorial composition and have participated in the exhibition: *The New truths* (1949), devoted to the abstract art, in the Museum of Modern Arts in Paris. For his part, the Lebanese Said Akl tried, since the start of the fifties, to be inspired by the Arabic letter, making from the calligraphy the central subject of his artistic activity, and devoted this personal option till his death in 2001.

Similar experimentations have been the task of Sudanese artists like Ouaki Allah, Ahmed Chebrine, Ibrahim Solhi. Hussein Zandoudi was, for his part, the Iranian Calligrapher the most popular. His contribution was important in this field. In 1957, he established a calligraphy school (Saghakhane) and was considered as one of the best representatives of calligraphy (see Mahmoud Amhaz, 1926, and Sherbel Dagher, 1990)

It is clear that the first attempts in this domain were individual, dispersed and isolated. The relationship between artists representing this pioneer movement remained too limited , even totally non-existent . It is only in the following years that they have evolved and consolidated. Calligraphy is then transformed, at the end of the sixties, in a separate phenomenon in the field of the contemporary plastic Arabic arts. But calligraphy , strictly speaking has not given rise to a school.

It remained susceptible to various opinions and orientations. Its representatives were not organized around specific theoretical affinities , or through decisive meetings

, like that of the Group of “ single dimension “ in Baghdad. However, there is an Arabic calligraphic movement which quickly spontaneously organized, and was the unifying point where it was , despite the unequal results , the most representative of the contemporary art movement in the Arab world. Many artists are then associated . Some had their various active experiences and are then passed to the calligraphy, seeking a specificity which defines them or meets their awareness of a necessary deep relationship with heritage. Others had a particular experience or were influenced by the plastic options of the representatives of the Western art.

Between the seventies and eighties of the 20th century, the number of artists who have converted to calligraphy as plastic essential choice has increased and they have embodied a particular phenomenon in most Arab countries : Mahmoud Hamed , Abdelkader Arnaout , Abdellatif Sammoudi Orabi and Assad (Syria) , Adel Sghaier , Mounir Najm, Rafik Sharaf, Omran Kaissi and Hussein Madi (Lebanon), Shakir Hassan Al Said, Rafa Nassri Ridha and Mehdi Matchar Azzawi (Iraq) Hamed Abdallah and Youssef Saida (Egypt) , Mahmoud Mlihi and Ahmed Charkaoui (Morocco) , Nja Mahdaoui and Néjib Belkhoja (Tunisia), Youssef Ahmed (Qatar) , and Mahjoub Ben Bella (Algeria) .

It should be noted, at this stage, that the relationship between art and literature is very old. Depending on historical circumstances and the persued aims , it has been implemented in different and unequal forms. It was , for example, to add to a text an illustrative and sometimes explanatory image , or to be inspired from the text to introduce an interpretive picture. So, this relationship is fundamental and enduring in history when it first focused on the content, until the letter became itself a structural component of the canvas and had a plastic value.

If art is considered as a naturally special language, inseparable from the history of human thought, it is the plastic expression of feeling and thought it concretely translates . We then perceive and understand them visually. Art crosses the text in a common expression of the same content and implementation of shared ideas that have emerged in the various movements such as romanticism, realism, symbolism, expressionism and surrealism. Thus, the relationship between art and literature was thorough and has crystallized according to new dimensions, in the wake of trends that favored the subject in relation to the form. It campaigned for the idea at the expense of methodological disputes.

Symbolism and surrealism , for example, had intended to shift the subject not towards its proper manifest dimension, but towards its irrational content and the sensitive and deepest reflections (in the psychic sense of the term) . Then , from the late 19th century , the dynamics of the plastic arts was also the matter of literature and of men of acquired letters to the cause of symbolism and supposed to defend it. Their influence was such that the plastic symbolism seemed to hide behind the literary movement and complied with

its choice. We know that André Breton , for example, considered surrealism as a method of poetic creation for which drawing and sculpture were plastic transformations of poetry and its most fertile field of inspiration. It was still necessary that the art liberated from forms which he copied out the visible aspect as it is, because the purpose of art should not be the satisfaction of the eye, but the expression of an intimate content .

Previously, Gibran Khalil Gibran , who was a firm believer of symbolism, had painted in his visual works the same content translated into his prose and his poetry , based in its turn, not on what is seen , but on the memory and on the imagination , trying to go beyond physical appearances , merely to achieve an essential background.

This relationship between art and literature is not limited only to content and the ability to make common ideas , but rises above this level and looks at the form as a sign or hint , having a particular significance because the relationship between form and content is so old . There is much between the image and meaning than between writing and the image. Writing and painting are similar, according to Paul Klee. They are even identical in the eyes of the Danish artist Asbjörn , who sees the writing in every image and sees an image in any writing. Thus studies and manifests in calligraphy have confirmed on their side , as it connotes as meaning and secrets attached to the letter, to the words and to pictorial symbols , in addition to what it embodies as visual plastic values.

Initially, the calligraphic forms were images that encompassed references and solid signs that the man had used , not for their aesthetic quality , but for these allusions and signs, before they are no longer changing and limited to instrumental, communicative and expressive functions . When the images are transformed into writing and have acquired new meanings, since early times , they have maintained their artistic value . In ancient Egypt , hieroglyphics kept its aesthetic and decorative values , while in the Levant turned it into abstract statements, representing cuneiform vowel sequences , and in the cities of the Canaanite coast became the phonemic alphabet .

Thus, writing changed and, depending on the historical circumstances, it took various forms : images, symbols, hieroglyphic signs , cuneiform signs , writings of the Far East , medieval manuscripts and calligraphy, but it remained marginal in the arts of the Renaissance and later periods of Western art . It only became particularly important in Europe with the Art Nouveau, at the end of the 19th century, when it was promoted in a structural element, essential in many pictorial works of this period. With the beginning of the 20th century, the letters and words have occupied a prominent place among the cubists and futurists such as Picasso, Braque and Marenti (see G. Severini , 1988).

In the work of the cubists, the letters and words are a kind of titles from newspapers, or cut sections out of context and added to the artistic work, where they acquire a synthetic quality , as well as other elements of the painting . However, the goal here is

to emphasize their testimonial function compared to the sensitive real where they come from , that is, they emphasize the close link between Cubism and reality that they do not want to dissociate . With respect to the attempts of some futuristic, they consist in freeing the words and letters of their informative function. They thus encourage the viewer to reconstruct the scattered parts of the canvas. The absurdist action of the Dadaists is this paradoxical point that led to the opposite of what it preached. Indeed, using graphics, some Dadaists shaped the "image - word» where the act of writing and the act of painting intermingle. In this new context, the graphic plasticity prevails even over its content, despite the clarity and legibility of the writing (see WS Rubin, dada art and surrealism) .

In terms of writing in the work of Paul Klee, it consists of allusions seemingly invented or abstractions and syntheses of visible things : in illegible writing that combines the geometric and plant point and figure, indefinite script and altered, enigmatic and slightly identifiable human figure . So writing that covers the entire canvas , giving it a magical fantasy appearance.

Arabic calligraphy, in turn, has made the letter a plastic unit that has played a central role in the artistic work, which , according to its representatives. It has added to the canvas aesthetic, symbolic and contemplative values and spiritual and cultural dimensions specific to each civilization that go beyond visual perception and do not stop there . In this case, the pictorial activity, based on the concept of "unique dimension " with Shakir Hassan Al Said, is a mystical practice where the artist surpasses and transcends his real life . The Arabic letter devoid of its linguistic functions in the general graphical context , and its significant function remains an independent artistic value , built on all of its linear graphics, its holes and figure movements, as unique axis and the subject of the artistic work . This means that the integration of the letter or the Arabic texts in the space of the canvas has turned them into a plastic material, whether legible or illegible, after the artist calligrapher has made from them new shapes, of artificial nature. Such claims to reconcile the inspiration drawn from a heritage which we are still attached with the consciousness of a necessary adaptation to the contemporary artistic novelties basically marked by the dominant abstraction of the 20th century.

Previously, since the mid-20th century , emerged a calligraphic movement aware that its main representative, Isidore Isou considered an avant-garde, global and open movement to all cultural activities , and seeking to radically restructure some of them , on the basis of this conviction: create something new , discover artistic, philosophical and scientific horizons with specific ways . Calligraphy, according to Isidore Isou , aims to lay the foundations for different aesthetic concepts, the purpose of art is to organize materials, to generate new reactions, give happiness to men and deliver them from their anxiety about the unknown.

Indeed, the art aims to achieve the aesthetic bliss and the sense of spiritual eternity sought by men. This is why the calligraphic movement made the letter the first plastic unit and considered it as indistinguishable from poetry and music, since it contains what unites basic plastic data and vocalic values they represent. Western calligraphers find in such a dual structure of the harmonious and conceptual letter, some originality compared to traditional synthetic items, abstract or borrowed from the visible world. The letter is not a geometric figure or object caught in the real world, but a pregnant sign of connotations and plastic possibilities that may be embodied in the space of the canvas. Followers of this movement have also considered the calligraphic form as the third fundamental dimension of art, after the figurative and the abstract dimension (see Philippe Broutin , 1972 , p. 7, 8, 14).

However, Arab artists who have opted for the letter did not only for its plastic potential. They were looking for a satisfaction of their ambitions and desires of plastic forms that can anchor their art in an old heritage, and distinguish it at the same time, not only in appearance , from the Western art . Indeed, calligraphy was initially the expression of animosity toward Western culture and the challenges that it created.

Various were then the text approaches, depending on whether was read sometimes and invested abstract values in other times , or even used as one of the units of the canvas. It has, thus, retained its graphic capabilities, specific to the Arabic writing, without significant alteration or interpretation by some artists , while others considered it as an entirely free use of the letter.

However, despite this difference between each other in the use of the letter and the word and their artistic treatment, the focus has been always on what they understand as plastic values and symbolic connotations. So the global option of these artists was indeed abstraction, even if the writings of the group “unique dimension» did not clearly address this issue , and if some calligraphers have resorted to figurative forms in the general context of the calligraphic artistic movement . However, despite that calligraphy has sometimes associated legible form inspired by nature with abstract figures, as in the works of some Arab artists, erecting a third fundamental dimension. It is at halfway between the figurative and the abstract, as we find with Isidore Tsu : abstraction remained the dominant in calligraphy. Because calligraphic canvas included, in most cases, only an interlacing of lines and colors , naturally abstract . For this, it is akin to the contemporary Western abstract art , rejecting imitation and its essential scientific constraints in painting nature, and seeks to break free from it .

It is also similar to the Arabic arabesque, where plastic space is almost limited to lines, decorative motifs and colors, tangled and opposed centrally in the work. Indeed, the point where we see an autonomous artistic value, independent of the line is the first

expression of this line. Its movement in space also allows the linear perception, regardless of the extent that it defines and which can be perceptible in turn, as an autonomous element. Nevertheless, the movement alters the kind of the point and the line making from them essential components in the plastic space. With their brewing and their accumulation , he moved from the initial inertia to a dynamism that adds a founding plasticity to the work (see Paul Klee, 1980 p.123ss).

It was obvious to some artists calligraphers to stick to the traditional conception of writing, especially for those who had their assets prior experience in this field, such as Saker Mohamed Said Abdel Ghani Alani, ... while that another group had surpassed these traditional forms to reach the plastic value of the letter and to use it in the construction of the artistic work (see Aziza Mohamed, 1977). Thus, in the works of Shakir Hassan Al- Said and Rafa Nassri , the letter becomes part of the painting and one of the remarkable signs . But the universe of Shakir Hassan Al Said retains its general abstractive atmosphere, whose flat space (or , in his words , "the unique dimension") compels the letter to a suggestive role , or a fragile, cursive , indistinct writing , as if the goal was to emphasize its symbolic connotations.

In other cases , the text retains its legibility in the form of whole literary excerpts , for example, transcribed on the canvas , as with Adnan Itil . The text is in charge here of plastic visual values , on the extent of the canvas, without losing its literary significance. The form and content remain concomitantly intact and equal, in a performance combining the linguistic with the visual. We notice then a big difference between spontaneity, in the poetry of Itil Adnan , and the expressionist structuralism in the works of Dhia Azzawi .

Other artists have focused their attention on the visual effect of writing disregarding its linguistic meanings. Then, there is among them a semblance of writing on the canvas, but without the presence of legible text. The writing remains, for them, a linear quasi -tissue, likely to occupy the whole painting and to build, by itself , its plastic space. Therefore, in the works of Mahjoub Ben Bella what remains from the writing is only an ersatz or a general visual impression and what the painting may show us as suggestions that return to us to the oriental worlds. The works of Mahdaoui blusher, are distinguished by the conservation of the kind of writing, a method which, through the use of the letter, makes the canvas a pointillist scope where visual impressions prevail, in relation to the lines and the shapes of letters.

There is also a calligraphy which is devoid of the use of the letter. It consists of artistic works that do not openly require this art, but which they resemble to it, either with regard to the general atmosphere or to the world it evokes in us, and whose structures are synthetic and linear, as known with Said Akl or Abdellatif Sammoudi . From another perspective, it seems that the extreme synthetism in writing letters has granted to some

artistic works a geometric appearance akin to the minimalist art , as we find with Mehdi Matchar , or the visual art with Mlihi and Mohamed Chabâa (Morocco) , Kamel Blata (Palestine) , Hassan Abu Ayech (Syria). In these works, the letter has no more its own expressive value. It becomes a pure, vertical, horizontal, oblique, broken… line whose redundancy and accumulation emit visual values and make it closer to the optical art.

Finally, there is another formula that combines different models where the legible text meets the illegible one, in symbiosis with other forms of figurative nature imitating reality, as with Azouzi Dhia , who combines the text and the figure and gives them expressive quality and symbolic connotations in relation to the reality of the contemporary Arab world. The letter here is one element of the synthetic canvas and not necessarily essential because it is in a complementary relationship with color and other synthetic components. It thus contributes to the development of new expressive shapes.

We can therefore deduce that the calligraphy that attracted a large number of Arab artists were a mold that each of its followers could operate on the basis of his culture, his optics, his relationship with writing. It was natural that the results were uneven, as they were determined by the approach of each artist, in the operation of the picture space, materials, instruments, as well as the treatment of a particular language and its status in the structure of the work. As we mentioned above, the letter may retain its shape and linguistic values , as if it was used as it is , or interpreted and transformed into a unity among other plastic units. It can also be a simple referring , a simple sign unimportant in itself, or completely melted , leaving to the viewer only this impression arose from the pointillist space, the same impression of arabesques.

Here and now, as part of the revaluation of calligraphic movement, it is necessary to recall the visual characteristics of the Arabic writing in the general context of the Islamic art, which it represents a component of it, and participates in the expression of its specific concepts . In fact, the writing is attached to various trades, as well as to architecture , to drawing , to painting and to other various decorative patterns (the arabesque). It acquired in these various states special plastic values . In addition to its religious values , since it is a preferred form of the Word of god, it has some artistic qualities it expresses thanks to its flexibility, its communicative strength and its susceptibility to combine vertical , horizontal and circular variables in percentage width and horizontal length. This is what explains its specific ambivalence, this “ form-meaning “ rich in linguistic content and visible elements , targeting the eye, inviting the viewer to contemplate . The Arabic writing thus preserved its natural quality and its linguistic connotations, even when it has been illegibly used. It has not given rise to an autonomous art, except in relation to the viewer when he contemplates it far and only specifically perceived in architecture from a pointillist, light scope, completing the wall bracket which it constitutes an integral part.

The Arab calligrapher has recently attempted to use writing to make from it an independent plastic material in relation to its meanings and its linguistic content . Now , thirty-five years after the genesis of calligraphy and its official consecration , fifty years after the first experiments , the issue arises concerning the role it has played and the recorded culmination . The same question concerns the general fortune of the plastic movement in the Arab countries, facing a crisis, relevant to the absence of theoretical thought and lack of comprehensive studies on the artistic history in the Arab world.

It is significant to read the statements of some Arab artists according to which there is no Arab art (Review: Al- Azmina , Volume I , No. 6 , 1987, p 40. . .) The existence of experienced Arab artists, who have accumulated experience and a worldwide reputation, does not, in fact, imply the existence of an Arab movement whose genesis and evolution are similar to those of artistic movements in the West. These latter found justification and explanation in their history and their specific societies, and showed both positive and negative postures of artists towards the reality. For the future of Western art, inseparable from the cultural evolution in general, has been closely linked to the social changes that have occurred in Europe since the late of the 18^{th} century, along with the general industrialization and with its impact on the social life. In contrast, even if the Arab artistic movement seems, too to be born from a specific social context, its relationship with reality is not necessarily more important than its commitment to Western artistic movements, in which it represents a simple extension in many cases.

This is what the Iraqi artist Jamil Hamoudi candidly recognized when he admitted that the inspiration he drew from the Arabic writing was only an attempt to avoid foreign influence.

The same crisis persists in the Arab world, where we see a scattering of various artistic movements, which coexist in the same social context. Where Calligraphy crosses so many contemporary artistic movements. While it was abandoned by some of its followers, such as the group of the "unique dimension ", rare were the enriching experiences for it, from those who joined it late. Other artists have tried particular experiences and led them to distant visual issues from their theses and their initial projects . Others have fallen into the ease and into visual and ephemeral temptations . Their works were only plastic screens, brilliant for the look, and merely to satisfy the dominant taste in some Arab countries . It is a taste that appreciates in such works, the easy readability of synthetic elements and their plastic relationship with the Arabic writing, the impetes of nationalist sentiments. Here, the calligraphic canvas imposed itself to the audience as a visual landscape, infinitely repeated without a significant renewal , and has not ceased to capture crowds of admirers tempted to get them for their easy legibility and which satisfy the look and spares it from the complex issues .

But in fact, this plastic crisis is not simply a local crisis. It is rather a global crisis resulting from the context of the modern world and dazzling transformations in scientific and technological fields. Beside that, the events that occurred in several Arab countries since the mid- 70s of the 20th century, significantly affected the evolution of the Arabic plastic movement and have even contributed to its transformation, its staggering and its bursting. It is probably this atmosphere that has inspired many artists to seek plastic forms that transformed the best to the bitter reality that we live.

Some have then renounced a few past experiences, in favor of an artistic model where the human figure is central, which is natural. Because it is unacceptable that calligraphy regenerates itself indefinitely. Every artistic movement born in the West has not survived, but have unraveled and giving way to another one, after reaching their objective and exhausted their basic plastic possibilities . As we see today, the artistic movements are not restricted to the inspiration drawn on heritage , especially in the Arabic writing, which is considered, at one time, as the ideal solution , and not confined in an exclusive stream . Instead, they are so totalizing that their manifestations, though uneven, do not relate to a single country. They can be embodied in the struggle between the old concepts and the new ones, tempting to exceed them, in accordance with the laws of the continuous change in the modern society. Among the manifestations of this crisis, we may include this breakdown of boundaries between the arts, between drawing and sculpture, the plastic art and other arts, such as the film industry, photography, and even theater. Added to all of this, the fact that the plastic art itself, at least in some of its manifestations, has crossed the conventions both formal and thematic, besides to the conventions relevant to styles, techniques, materials and ways of production and commercialization subject to the law of supply and demand.

Art imitating the visible world , whose importance lies in the fidelity to the real painting or the identical reproduction , turned to exist in itself, according to its own standards and expressing an inner world, as Kandinsky believed to be finally whether a denial of its own existence , or a metonymy of the artist himself . Also, the latter sometimes worked to be physically and totally the center of his artistic work, especially with the artistic streams of conceptual obedience. It is true that the emergence of the photograph or the cinematic image released the painting from its decorative and documentary function, and contributed to the birth of the modern art extricated from its foundations, norms and traditional criteria. But it coincided with the beginning of the new inventions such as telephone, video, computer and the Internet, in part become competitors.

It is implied that the concept of the painting, precisely what it was agreed to be called the *easel painting*, which is a basic model, for more than four centuries, began its metamorphosis from the late 19th century , which witnessed the beginning of modern

scientific movements and all of their results that ensued as a transformation of the general and social structures and concepts . When the technique of Western art has been internationally disseminated, it lived its own transformation in the countries where it had emerged. And while opening to the arts of other ancient and contemporary civilizations in Asia and Africa , the West had critical positions with regard to the concept of the picture, which made possible that Francastel called "the decline of classical plastic space " and the frequent statements that are very significant such as the" death of art "and the" end of easel painting" .

However, the search for new means of expression does not mean that the calligraphic stream was vain and did not achieve its objectives. Despite the various opinions and positions in its regard, some of which were negative. It expresses a situation that is considered as a landmark. Many Arab artists have responded by drawing on the letter and return to heritage with an adequate inspiration to their ambitions, and which may strengthen their belief in a necessary accompaniment of the West, and with a confrontation with its cultural hegemony. Calligraphy is a unique experience in the contemporary Arab world. It was capable to make the Arabic letter a plastic material, enrich the global calligraphic movement with a new contribution adding to it universes that were previously unknown. However, it did neither upset the dominant Western criteria and notions, nor crossed the concept of the Western painting.

If, at the beginning , Arabic calligraphy is attached to the West and appeared to be a simple extension of Western abstract art, it has neither developed from a small calligraphic movements, like that of Isidore Isou, neither from or another particular abstract movement. What Maybe for us permissible to synthesize in this perspective, is that Arab artists have been influenced by the general atmosphere of Western art movements , seduced by some of their representatives , and are backward compared to them . This is what has awakened in them the spirit of exploration and directed their attention to the plastic values of their artistic heritage, to be inspired from it and use it in the development of a new artistic vision.

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Calligraphy between illusion of authenticity and call To modernization

Prof. Sabri Mansour

Since its introduction at the beginning of last century, the Arabic plastic and cultural movement constantly suffered from its allegiance to European artistic techniques where it learned the mechanisms of expression and various techniques. Some factors, such as the struggle for independence in the Arab world and the national liberation, have contributed to increased calls in the search of distinctive cultural elements and differentials in heritage plastic forms. Thus, when the phenomenon of calligraphy appeared during the 1940›s in the Arab East, many artists have been seduced by its method and style.

Calligraphy has diligently spread throughout the Arab world, from the Atlantic to the Gulf. The picture rails in the halls of art exhibitions have covered all kinds of writing such as « nasskh », « diwani », « Kufi » and « Roka » and writing created of all parts, in line with the new pictorial use . Calligraphy has therefore offered vast potential and graceful visual representations. The dominance of this optical invention covered, besides the flat canvas, the resulting models of sculpture , ceramics and architecture . Arab artists seemed to have finally reached their goal , discovered a way of deliverance to affirm their Arab artistic identity and achieve their earnest hope, namely the development of an art with Arabic form and essence. Because the new calligraphic style determines and reveals them, being derived from their language, it is rejuvenating at the bottom of their artistic heritage and allowing a plasticity that rehabilitates the past. At the same time, it gives rise to a modern orientation in harmony with the modernist Western art features, making possible the requisites of modernity, in terms of artistic vision in conflict with the content and in favor of pure plastic principles.

Today, nearly half a century after the emergence of this vision and this artistic trend , following the migration of their calligraphers representatives to schools and the more modernist movements such as media , video and other postmodern streams, the time has come to thoroughly revamp Arabic calligraphy to reassess it , review its methods and

styles, discuss its achievements . We might as well see if this art is actually equipped with a high value , accountable to the elements of authenticity and heritage features . We must also ask whether calligraphers were able to get the voice of the Arab man and its causes. Finally, we must ensure that they have managed to provide the world with a specific artistic vision, deep and rich enough to be considered as a true-added value for the human art and the proof that modern Arab man is likely to create and invent in the field of visual arts.

the Crisis of Identity

At the beginning of its genesis in the Arab world, visual art has echoed the political, social and cultural transformations in which the overall aim has been to achieve the progress made by the European civilizations since the Renaissance of the 15th century. After several centuries of imprisonment and underdevelopment, plastic art was, for the Arabs, a useful means for the modernization of their societies. The first generations of artists in Egypt, Iraq and other countries of the Levant, then undertook creative experiences in the footsteps of European models, imitating their schools and their artistic processes . They had been taught by foreign teachers and artists arrived in Arabic countries, or through visits to Europe in travel arts studies .

The Methods in vogue were those of classicism, realism and expressionism so that Arab artists have consecrated, extracting from them symbols, lines and figures of their environment. Then, during the 1930s and the 1940s, a second-generation succeeded the pioneers. It comes from the European Schools born from the revolution and rebellious spirit, that prevailed in Europe in the aftermath of the World War II. The revolution itself was a call against the traditionalism and the search for new art forms. So, during a few decades, dozens of art schools have emerged with various features and trends, claiming all of modernity.

This has made many followers and standard bearers in the Arab world, and some works to emerge quickly in the Arab artistic field of cubist, surreal and abstract inspiration. The craze of the new generations of artists to these schools is worth this of their European representatives themselves. Their slogan was the need to be in tune with the times and its new ideas and willing to sow the seeds of modernity in their countries. They were indeed enlightened elite, rich with their contact with European culture artists. Louis Awadh describes them as :

They spoke French in most cases , know English and mastered Arabic at the same time with various styles ... And I only see them in such collection of Rimbaud, André Breton and Aragon , or novel Kessler, Sioni or Laurence , otherwise in an essay on the civilizations of the Incas, Aztecs and blacks.

These reformers were then faced with two conservative movements, one turned to the traditional European schools , the other , rather fundamentalist , was calling to the imitation of the forms of Arabic artistic heritage , including the oldest of them , such as the ancient Egyptian art or the arts of the Levant.

The 1940s were , in turn, large concerns about the quest for an Arabic artistic identity and how to get there , oscillating authenticity and modernity. That's then that the Arabic calligraphy appeared in the art field as a satisfactory answer to the question of the role of art in the development of a modern Arab culture and that most artists are converted to the calligraphic art .

Arabic calligraphy , plastic arts

Arabic writing became, after the expansion of Islam, part of the message that Muslims destined for the whole world. They are also contrived to maintain in this writing the rules and perfect its shapes, to a point that the graphic science has become one of the virtues of the educated people. Rulers lavished the environment with care and protection to this science, which made technique prospered, forms multiplied and schools diversified. The position of Islam which was spread and fixed in the minds, with which painting is sacrilegious , was one of the factors that have transformed the Islamic art to a decorative art, designed to embody the Divine Word and disseminate in it the verses on the surface of all human artifacts. It is also that this dimension which has enhanced the value of the Arabic writing. The skill of writing has also become as important as memorizing and reciting the Quran, giving a religious emotion to the admiration doomed by Muslim to calligraphy.

This so-called Islamic aesthetics has been a main impetes for some modern Arab artists who were inspired by the writing in the choice of decorative elements of their works, by following in it the footsteps and revealing beauty. At this stage of the self-seeking and the resuscitation of the heritage values , they were referring to modern art , particularly the school of abstract art that gave the greatest interest to the formal components of the work.

The manifesto of Arab artists has been made public at their conference held in Baghdad in 1973 , contained a complete presentation of their orientation towards a plastic inspiration drawn from Arabic writing , in order to reveal the Arab identity and everything linked to the letter as a linguistic sign. They took support on the contemporary artistic aspirations and their awareness that the alphabet used the letter itself as a simple support. They cared a little of this or that logic making the linguistic sign an equivalent of the word , as was the case in the Far East or that of the cuneiform in ancient civilizations.

This manifesto admits that the inspiration drawn from the letter goes back to ancient times, and then evolved in the Islamic Middle Ages, before being used by some schools

of art in the world, such as cubism, futurism , abstract art , expressionism and surrealism. It also states that the Arab artist is more apt than others to revitalize his own alphabet, because the real credit enjoyed by the letter is its linguistic dimension in its social, spiritual and emotional at the same time . The native speaker and the Arab writer of his mother tongue remain closer to apprehending the letter than the non-native speaker.

In addition, the manifesto highlights the artistic option of calligraphers who saw the letter as an independent experimental unit , to the potential that could make an unparalleled raw material from it and conducive to artistic configuration, without any need to be associated with other meanings , since the letter is so rich in linguistic values .

It explains, on the other hand, the numerous motives that were the basis of this approach , and whose most important was the formal logic and the desire to invent an Arab art . Thus, calligraphers declared their desire to move from the local level to a broader national horizon , to glorify the interest of this expression, which is artistic, civilizational and inspired from heritage and permeable to the language of the time . The objective is to make effective the Arab person in the field of art and the unification of long branches, rooted as an integral and fundamental part of the contemporary human civilization.

It is also an issue of two types of letters: the first, is of a geometric order and of the desired appearance, the second, of less rigid order, like paraph and ordinary handwriting. But both types are considered as one of the sources of calligraphic research of contemporary plastic art.

Calligraphers emphasize also their concern to overcome the artistic work of traditional molds for the benefit of contemporary horizons, to develop the calligraphic expression of art into a new language derived from the alphabetic system.

encouraging factors

Needless to say that the support of several circumstances framed this new direction where the Arabic letter became a plastic component . As calligraphers have announced, the most important was the imitation of European modernity in what it rejected and neglected as topics and content , to retain then the abstract visual elements only, where the experience allows to create an artistic universe different from the real world. You should know that at the time, the school of abstract art had invaded Europe in the 1930s of the 20th century and the American expressionist school had conquered the world of plastic art.

Therefore, abstraction was supposed to be the purpose and extreme ambition of every artist , and every artist whose works were referring to reality or meaning it was treated in backlog . The Arabic script , relatively mathematical , geometric and abstract was conducive to the modernist spirit , as it had endless possibilities of enunciation and attractive composition , which encouraged the painter to make unlimited calligraphic

variants. Tarek Sharif wrote about this :

Arab artists have studied abstract art and discovered its possibilities , as they studied the real and the heritage elements in the light of this art.

The artistic mold (abstraction) was ready to be used, which spared the painter effort and energy that could have lost by inventing his own mold. He had only to run in this available form many local variants developed from the Arabic letter , to obtain an artistic work of Arabic and contemporary identity at the same time .

The second factor was the religious vision which has widespread reluctance with regard to the figurative human form and the imitative painting. This element , already engraved in the soul of the Arab painter who was anxious not to be offset from his religious affiliation and the calligraphic choice , it brought a spiritual peace and transport to his faith .

As stated the Iranian painter Jamil Hamoudi , one of the pioneers of calligraphy :

" The moment when the idea comes to my mind to get inspiration from the Arabic letter in my work, was a kind of chanting and prayer for my terrified soul of the vacuum prevailing in European life that I had just discovered . The fear of losing myself in a heritage completely cut off from my intellectual and national being provoked in me a revolt against the materialistic values of the civilization of machines and the so low things . So I kept my spiritual values that strengthen the authenticity of civilizational and cultural links of my life , and I saw no more honorable and sacred than the Arabic letter, as a source where I can make myself and quench my thirst to expression and creation."[(1)]

Thus, from the very bottom of the calligrapher painter came a desire for closeness with the ordinary public, communication and agreement with the recipient, in order to make easier his mission and convey his artistic message. For the Arab public, whose consciousness and psyche balked at figurative art , was more inclined to the appreciation of the art of abstract calligraphers . Similarly, the Arabic letter enjoyed great favor, since it was for centuries the support of the Islamic faith and the language of the Koran . It was almost a visual sign of this religious function , had acquired a special sanctity . The paintings executed with graceful characters , including those which referred to the sacred texts and Hadiths of the Prophet , used to decorate homes and public spaces .

A third factor was in the favorable attitude of lucky Arabs , who found in readable works of calligraphers an ideal model that could easily to the mind and imagination , conceive, understand , decipher and recognize . They were visually legible , flexible , clear and adequate texts in relation to their modest culture.

The fourth factor was that of the reception of foreign and specifically European public , who had only seen in the paintings of Arab calligraphers a folk product whose

whole point was to designate a recognizable territory in the world . They appreciated not for its high plastic value itself, but for the difference and uniqueness of its figures and its features, and its relationship with the Arab world that it reminded that meant.

Arab letters in Western forms

Various known Arabic writing processes have made it possible to create infinite variations and designs , most of which remained in orbit around abstract art. There are even very similar experiences to those of European artists in this field , with the exception of a few naive productions , realized by some calligraphers . It consists of those who have used the letter to represent some ideas , giving more expressiveness to the letter in its relation with the meaning and its enunciative scope, or to embody human and animal figures , birds and other figurative subjects. And they took advantage of the decorative potentialities of the letter and its various configurations, or even to freely transform the letter, changing its visible and legible appearance for cosmetic purposes , considering it as an expressive material belonging to the world plastic creation , irrespective of its other values.

Calligraphers have used abstract art in all its forms as a mold where they cast their letters. This allowed them to invent a derived aesthetic figuration of its infinite possibilities in terms of postage development of the geometric standards that link between letters in a word. Because the aesthetic form is finally dependent on the requirements of the composition of any work of art in itself. Thus, most of the paintings of calligraphers have relied on the plastic eloquence attached to elements of the abstract art , such as redundancy, repetition, specific games on the surface of the canvas , the use of the opposite and repetitive directions , geometric rhythm, the derivative movement of successive forms , the combination of decorative , geometric and calligraphic elements in the universe of harmonious or contradictory figures . These visual, illusory suggestions evoke the paintings of Vasarely and they are highlighted , the colors which are in descending tones , all intertwined lines, shapes are derived from each other by their proximity or their distance from the starting point.

The paintings of calligraphers appeared, despite their geographic affiliations, such as the abstract works for this interlacing of abstract figures , colors , words , letters, free geometric patterns , expression of a color system and an independent optical text. But it is enough to remove the letter to reduce the work to an absolute abstraction, unrelated to the Arab- Islamic artistic heritage, which is exactly the opposite of the identity objectives of calligraphers . The style and the artistic development remain Also the aspects that had the greatest value and the highest status. This is why calligraphers must devote their efforts to the invention of the plastic figure, likely to associate the authenticity of this component that was the letter , the originality and the independence of the shape and the overall

plastic structure.

In addition, it was quite normal that some Europeans abstract artists got inspired by the forms of the Arabic letter in their works , as they had invented this art called abstract. The strict observation of the works of European painters like Paul Klee, permits to confirm the exact match between the creative approach of the Arabic letter with the plastic musical possibilities and the most successful abstract art.

Some artists continued to use the Arabic letter with the esteem and with due regard , did not transgress its heritage origins , have preserved all the beauty of its identity and its forms, which dedicated the majestic elements and the moderate character, attached to the works of the first traditional calligraphers. These painters were apparently confident enough to not impose the Arabic letter to any shape. This too had favored its external aspects and made it losing its initial value, preserved by Islamic artists, faithful to the decorative, linguistic and spiritual context.

The calligraphers, meanwhile, found that the Arabic writing could form the basis for the development of a modernist Arab art. They have not lost sight of the heritage that is somewhat abstract , since it rejects imitation and copying, constituting in this way a different universe of the real world, agreeing in this with the distinctive features of the modern art. Calligraphers decided then to implement a so problematic slogan in an Arab world still in groping phase, devoid of recent artistic credit, likely to be increased and modernized.

Samir Assayegh considers the idea of turning writing into plastic parts too vague, from a purely aesthetic point of view. Because, he thinks, this implies that we attach to the writing a kind of absolute plastic self-sufficiency. However, before the modern calligraphy, we detect a beauty that is not due to the use of heritage, but to the use of the principles of modern art. The letters are «drawn “ and not written according to their nature, their standards and their own aesthetic logic. Instead, they become signs , figures and a geometric system , rigorous and united, that is to say that the inspiration drawn from the Arabic letter is actually an Arabization of the painting.

Furthermore, we should consider with some doubt the aesthetic credit of the calligraphers’ experience, the renewing scope it actually had on the plastic level. Indeed, the Arab calligrapher artist reverses the order established by certain forms, forgetting their own reality and their meanings to use them again. He tries to remember the visible things of the old and traditional societies, with all that this implies as a contradiction and alteration of these “things” cut from natural materials that have been engendered and their shape , features and rhythm are determined. This is why many calligraphers’ artists think that most of those working in the field of calligraphy are uneducated and ignorant of the rudiments of the Arab mind and the foundations of the Arabic writing, and they have no

idea of their heritage and the sacred and plastic value of the Arabic language. They use the Arabic writing as a decorative art they think they could pervert, and they can destroy the foundations in their paintings erroneously called calligraphic paintings.

It is clear that the problem does not lie in their quest for independence and distinction from the West, but in the act of use itself. For the most part, this is the method applied in this use of the spirit of heritage and not merely the aesthetic exploitation of his letter.

Finally, the function that the Arabic writing, jewelry, ceramics, or wood carving, realize is absent in modern canvas which claims to be inspired by the Islamic writing , painting or the decorative art . The function of modern Arab painting has been always in the wake of those of the modern Western painting. Modernist artists have indeed distinguished writing as an artistic medium used primarily for linguistic communication , from that where the words and the letters are assembled on the surface of the canvas, but separated from their original meaning, as simple shapes , lines , ranges, colors, dimensions , holes, ... All kinds of elements shaping a plastic alphabet from the modern canvas.

What remains of calligraphy?

When the European art of the postmodern period followed guidance beyond the abstraction which served as a technical basis for calligraphers, only some unusual art forms have emerged, such as the arts of the earth, video, media and others. Arab calligraphers were quick to abandon their letters. They have engaged in an artistic world of expression indifferent to the specificity and establishing the principles of globalization, where the references vary, techniques multiply , ideas resemble in a sole purpose of an art which erases the artistic and cultural features . Thus, for more than half a century , the arts around the world , have undergone total transformations, where the deep development gave birth to a new kind of similar processes , whose reception is borderless and can be classified in the category of " the world art ."

What remains now of calligraphy , is what it revealed as an experience of the contemporary Arab artist in search of his being in the midst of art schools and significant orientations. Even if it failed to achieve this noble cultural aim, namely the creation of a contemporary and authentic Arabic art, it gives an edifying lesson to the future generations in order to spare its contradictions and shortcomings, and be more capable to meet the successes in their own projects : creating an independent Arab art, which is the voice of the Arab being and culture, that brings out the spirit and embodies the effects of this art, in the clearest and sharpest manner.

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Calligraphic paintings: Essence and reality.

Talal Maalla

There have been a lot of interpretations of the status of calligraphic paintings, their shapes and their artistic events in the Arab visual and plastic arts. It was the same for historical writing about the relationships between the writing and the line, their impact on the easel painting, or the arts activities to the so various aspects and configurations, knowing that the product is an integral part to the aesthetic communication between the creator and the receiver. However, generally these readings remained dependent on the spirit of art criticism ranging from historisation, description, explanation and fleeting comments. There is no substantive analysis with modern methods or development of this experience, according to critical and intellectual data.

These make it possible to interact with the artistic requirements that pervert by themselves in the Arabic works. They also allow the reform of the whole experience, as a support of a human background of unstable values over time. They must take into account the feverish anxiety of the conscience about the problems of art and its new destiny, outside the academic hegemony, of the religious heritage and the logic of a revival of heritage and its conservation as an inalienable power. This relates to the absolute magnitude of the concept, strengthening the traditional environment, conducive means to that end, in societies whose evolutionary rhythms do not admit convergent positions. This also applies to the influence of social and psychological factors on the art, and which restates the requirement and the ways of its reception and its apprehension.

since the first trials , from the middle of the last century to the 1970s and 1980s , there was a net interest granted to the inspiration drawn from the ancient heritage as a pretext for the development of the specific identity and the specific experiences of calligraphy. We can try to identify the scope of the various approaches with the Arab artists, about the calligraphic compositions inspired from the line and the writing, about the changes and the problems resulting therefrom, that is to say all what has prompted artists or writers to look for visual and historical references. We can try to understand how

they sought to assert the ties with heritage, revealing the depth of the concepts used in the past in the visual plan, how they relied on the wealth of the civilization as they were configured, according to historical data and on all levels, including the political, social and intellectual plans.

The issue of the relationship with the past dominated the artistic concepts of the calligraphic paintings, hampering the opening to the experiences to each other, at the regional level, and the achievement of useful results to overcome the serious problems of the dependence on the West and its visual production. While this latter outdistanced its modernity by critics and the choice of new concepts in line with the angst of humanity, the Arabic painting was still obsessed with the past, trying to justify its right to say its ego, its being and identity, thanks to the sacred.

The concepts in vogue, relating to heritage, contemporaniety and authenticity often insisted on the denial of the links with Western artists or their influence on the Arabic works. They therefore demanded a plastic Arabism as confirmed by participants in the Arab Congress of Fine Arts in Damascus in the early 1970s. They fixed there a list of artists working in areas in relation to writing, to the decorative arts, to architecture and to painting, baptizing them: Authentic Arab artists. They also reviewed some experiences where they emphasized the spiritual values and the desire for permanent works, writing poetry on arabesques and decorative arts.

This is what has prompted Moroccans of the time to give manifests to get rid of the Western model of the easel painting. It was the same with the Orientals, as with the group of the “unique dimension”, or with the Sudanese, Tunisian and other artists. We can generally synthesize concerns by the feeling of the need to discuss this urgent issue made by many contradictions and problems. I had already, in previous symposiums, reiterated the impossibility of separating the experience of the Arab artist from the general context. This latter was especially marked by the decline of academic institutions, the underdevelopment of the Arab societies, the cultural isolation from the Western cultural axis, and the non-involvement of the Arab intellectual in the mechanisms of the social construction. All these factors have hindered the implementation of several projects dreamed by creators, and that could introduce changes that would entrench the presence of the arts, to make the postage from the legacy of colonialism, and cause a liberating renaissance. I will tell further how the artist was able to recognize it in accordance with the circumstances marking some Arab countries in particular, closely following the global news, interconnected in many ways.

Habib Bida, a Tunisian researcher, put his finger on the essential necessary elements to develop an identity, an artistic specificity and a method. He thinks that it is necessary to address the calligraphic works as signs. He recalled that at the beginning, in the mid-60s,

some artists were aware of the need to embody a specific and local artistic identity, linked to the concepts of patriotism and nationalism. Thus, the Arab artist was distinguished by a particular and modernist standing compared to the Western art, methodically developed.

This quest had found its answer in the use of the patterns of heritage, which entered the architectural decoration, both in construction and in planning, and there we could talk of a modern use of heritage. Among other used signs, there were those of the Arabic script integrated in easel paintings, sculpture, tapestries, engraving and artistic ceramics. It was done almost without prior collusion, in most Arab countries, if not Islamic. Thus this migration of signs took place, from their initial utility supports, towards other new, artistic supports , resulting in an Arabic unity fairly comparable to those that politicians have done in the context of some organizations and institutions.

While referring to the interest of a studying the plastic problem in relation to an artistic discourse, sensitive to the social and collective reception, the Tunisian researcher insists on the idea that the approach of calligraphic painting as a sign opened the critical, philosophical and aesthetic horizons in intellectual circles, bypassing the traditional analysis of the identity and the specificity, supposedly authentic and modern at once. This kind of semiotic approach deserves research and debate, since it offers the passing of two issues: traditionalism and fashion, so obvious in this plastic rumination of calligraphic works. Our researcher tries in particular to put in order the objective of this new approach of the calligraphic work, with a speech focused on the aesthetic sense.

It is a thesis that addresses the issues in relation to the collective reception of art and emphasizes the idea that the influence of social factors on the development of the arts is crucial. So there are significant relationships between art and its functions on one hand and, and between the social realities involved in his life, his evolution or his transformation on the other hand. In any case, it is still impossible to admit a totalizing vision of art or to reduce it to a period that would determine the collective reception, or the limitation of readings for each of the periods which the art goes through, which is considered as an indicative signifier of his time and his environment. It is especially important to identify the causes of the mystery and the signs of its evolution up against any rigid and creationist interpretation. This should push the creator to require constant and constructive renewal of the cognitive movements and the changing interactions between social structures and cultural structures.

This is why the study of calligraphic works must take into consideration the mobility of art and not its attachment to a particular state of individuals, exclusive experiences, political and economic stages that led to new artistic types in specific contexts, associated with a demand and a need, or even its ideological confiscation according to transitional ideas, determined by the experience of a particular artist. Rather we must reformulate

the questions critically, on several experiments, on the basis of the periods of growth and decrease, expansion and sclerosis, which staked the calligraphy painting, to recognize the merits of this experience. Calligraphers will then retain their merit in the Arabic plastic movement.

Rather than to disperse in the search of a calligraphic invention, and despite the common purpose, there should have been, beforehand, to a reading of reality, identifying the joints that determine its movement, recognize the nature of need that the society has to see its own reflection in the discourse of intellectuals. Such a movement soon emerged in the adoption of global intellectual novelties, in the West, while the Arab society was just following the political changes and meet their basic needs. On the other hand, the desired modernity in the entire artistic community was confronted, for many reasons, by the difficulty of crossing the time and attaining our Arab societies. It is as if the very depths prevented the synchronization of the movements between the political, economic, educational levels and especially the cultural level, embodied by the arts lato sensu. Art projects should thus remain set in a stone due to the absence of a clear vision for most artists. A simple proofreading of the Arabic work confirms the existence of a number of conflicts between the artistic orientations arising from the struggles and differences between the intellectuals, unable to elaborate a clear vision. It was the war between the basic structures of cultural production and the thinking structures, intended to organize interactions between the creation and the forces influencing it.

Nobody ignores the close relationship between art and its exchange value, which is the financial interest it represents for some circles including, for example, private lounges and buyers. When calligraphers strove to assert their identity in the early 70's, art in general cherished a modernist ambition. Calligraphers then announced their plans by the claims which have not survived, because of outdated speech they adopted. Their attempts to revive the ties with certain factors, instead of propelling forward, have crippled them and shrunk their numbers. Foremost among these factors, there was the relationship with the art market, despite the support provided by officials and media. These were generally motivated by political reasons and complied with the requisites of an Arab identity and an artistic specificity reflecting the dream of ideological movements in the Arab scene in general. This is what deprived calligraphers of the competitive ability and solidarity of the average and liberal avant-garde which supported the modernist values in the Arab world.

Those who were interested in these issues then found, with the decline of these pioneers, regression in arts in general, as well as a weakening of links between official institutions and calligraphic painting, parallel to the change of the ideological concepts and the continuity of the hegemony of the academic structures on several artistic directions.

This is what prompted some to describe the calligraphic paintings of “traditional” and belittle the work of their creators. This confirms the monopolization of the critical function by academic structures, the maintaining of their role in the recognition of a particular exclusive experience of some forms in the institutions, the fairs and the available major exhibitions. They censored the artistic talents and closed the open doors in front of a lot of artists who could introduce significant changes, using productions excluded from exchange, dissemination, use and standards.

We need models to analyze many relatively effective calligraphic experiences, which will undoubtedly ensure actual evidence of their evolution and the relative positions in the debate on the Arabic works. We will see then serious antagonism, in which everyone was trying to assert his ego, describing his essential activity. The hostility lay between those who wanted to overcome the easy temptations and fight against the time, and those who preferred to return to the leverage points of the civilization, through the elements of heritage. Culture was split, it turned into a vicious circle where it was impossible to choose a position to assess the artistic activity, or to decide which cultural forms could help to find his way and which reference could justify his preferences .

All this has had an impact on the two experiences: this of the avant-garde and this of the hardcore calligraphers, at a time when everyone thought was a contemporary and plays a social role as a scout, preacher and educator. If we look at many Arab experiences of the 70s and the end of the last century, we will see how they could translate the contradictions, dreams and visions discussed above. These were experiences where modernity, religion and mysticism interfered, while others opened about a vision of calligraphic history.

Some artists have been tempted by the easy operation of the letter, other artists have used it as a sign or hint, devoid of the original meanings. Prohibition, censorship, the creation of beautiful exploited by art, exploitation of the sacred, under the rule of the law of the market, all of that happened in societies still bearing the scars of centuries of obscurantism, maintaining rural relations, maintaining rural, agricultural industrially dependent relationships, feudal, so eager for independence, very anxious about the future and the need to create contemporary values.

Certainly, the introduction of letters and graphics in artistic works do not involve the use of religious aspirations as a pedestal, but showed a desire to find solutions to the art in crisis and in need of inventiveness. All these aspirations and the social dynamism that resulted were important, especially as the art audience in the Arab world was neither wide nor permeable to the complexity in the structure of the cultivated societies. It consisted of a homogeneous class, composed of wealthy, enlightened and familiar people with arts, that is to say of a national bourgeoisie and a middle class that was generally the destination of the art production.

In addition, the owners of the private rooms, the intermediaries between artists and museums and the heads of institutions were instrumental in the creation of a network to accommodate arts. A sociological analysis of the art should also explain not only the historical genesis of an independent field, but also the historical configuration of the contemporary models of reception. It should also explain how and when the public became, for the first time, willing to host artistic works and to consider them as independent "objects", that is to say beautiful "objects" in themselves and for themselves.

There is also a supplementary question, to know whether the ability to receive such artistic works was also shared by communities and social classes. Many critics, especially by the Marxist philosopher Theodor Adorno, state that the artistic "independence" is actually one of liberating factors. They persuade to think that the relative independence gained from the field of art and culture led him to bring alternative values, which are not dependent on the lucrative mobiles governing the economic field, or the limited interests that dominate the political field, for example.

But Bourdieu is inclined to explain the artistic independence based on a different concept. For him, in a world increasingly subject to the law of the market, it is a kind of luxury to have the time and taste for the pleasures offered by the independent art. For this, the taste of art and high culture may become the privilege of the upper classes, so a sign of the objective distance of this class and its consciousness of being above the materialistic needs, wild, that haunt the ruling classes of society (Bourdieu, 1991).

Calligraphic painting influenced by the historical circumstances of its production in the Arab societies, which is reflected in the type of reception that it reserved, according to its spontaneous configuration on the one hand and, on the type of the groups involved in reception, on the other hand.

Due to this influence, the calligraphic painting was faced with the problem of its independence as a free and expressive art form, and that until the end of the last century. It would have been easy for it to reformulate many plastics substitution values , but its relations with the political power often limited its role and prevented it from having a big impact outside the cramped project of reconciliation between the modernist creation and heritage.

Because of its compromise with the dominant academism, the bourgeoisie and the art dealers, calligraphic painting seemed to be too submissive to play a more important role, without attempting to replace the modernist movement. This latter had, in turn, been involved in complex plays of submission and compromise, despite its struggle to impose itself on the society as a contemporary artistic activity, open and independent. Many critics of the Arabic art movement talked about this modernist art and insisted especially on its susceptibility to the changes in the human life, its flexibility towards the requirements of

the art market, his pugnacity towards the effects of disqualification of the middle class. It was under the influence of economic and complex changes occurring in the Arab world during the last quarter of the last century and the beginning of the 21st century.

As we know, the recent years have brought new ways and alternative spaces generating and reforming many artistic concepts, in general, and calligraphic, in particular. There is a large aperture on the critical and philosophical situation, mainly through conferences, seminars and debates between various levels of several critics, anxious to disentangle all kinds of issues and confusing and undetermined theses. This is what has broadened the scope of critical work in the concerned areas and made possible the preparation of opinions and controversies which, without constituting a school, have at least highlighted the weaknesses and strengths of the calligraphic experience.

These works have particularly ignored several critical insanities of authors who submitted the calligraphic work to ideology and hampered, in fact, its significant presence among the mechanisms of change of artistic expression means. The new readings thus had the advantage of actually asking the problems of the relationship between calligraphy and language. They highlighted the rhetorical features of the plastic form, contradictory connotations of knowledge and its references, unveiled the unsaid in the calligraphic activity, and husked experiences based on signs and their presence in the field. Visual works become then polysemic , rather than remaining limited to a multiple transcendence .

Obviously, criticism has helped to transform many concepts in the treatment of calligraphic painting, exceeding the abstract, mere pictorial manipulation, the multiplication of their optical usage as a specific genre which denoted a plastic and thematic nature. Belonging to abstract art is not declined only in opposition to the figurative art, but in distinction from the experimental art, sensitive experience as a source of a lot of confusion, according to philosophical perceptions accurate in this area.

Indeed, the conflict between the rational experience of the abstract art and the sensory experience in experimental art was a source of many difficulties of the calligraphy painting. Many artists had confused this latter with the figurative painting, with works presented as new plastic products, based on the desire to experiment some novelties and prioritize the available resources outside the easel painting. Abstraction is in fact the basis of a philosophical doctrine which rejects experimentation and relies on the rational achievements for the elaboration of theories of existing things and the invention of rules, in order to design knowledge. Abstraction is also distinguished by a kind of particular perception, based on the principle of mental isolation of the distinctive features of things, or relations between these distinctive features and other things.

The thought of abstraction consists therefore in this mental process and its outcomes,

it defines the functional nature of the scientific and cognitive activity of the human being, in addition to the nature of the things themselves. On the other hand, experimental research is supposed to be a philosophical doctrine for which the sensory experience is the unique and fundamental source of knowledge acquisition. This is obviously inconsistent with rationalism, for which reason alone can acquire knowledge, because the reason is the best suited to find the logical laws. Experimental science, does not consider the general and necessary aspect for any knowledge within reason, but only in experience.

In the founding manifesto , published for the first time in the newspaper : The Iraqi Republic , No. 880 of 1966 , by Shakir Hassan Al- Said, the reader can quickly identify with the artist the ambition to link the human with the universe, in the mystical sense of the term. It proposes to change the attitude towards the artistic work and see it as something to contemplate, to discover the truth in all its dimensions. He considers the artist with all his energy as a generous witness to the beauty and majesty of the universe, identifies beauty and perfection , distinguishes in the world, exteriority and interiority , poses as a condition of the artistic work for the testimony truth, from the basis of the world . He added that the artist should not just be a mere witness, but a witness of duty. Because, thanks to his work, he is involved in the outside world as if it were a natural element when appropriate, to observe it personally , feel it by his entire being as an integral part , as far as the worshiper intervenes in his rituals during his prayers. In this sense, art is a kind of worship, in his art; every sincere artist is not different from the worshiper engaged in his worship.

It is less a matter to discuss these ideas than remind the discourse surrounding it, from the beginning, calligraphic paintings, beyond all limits. In fact, many Arab artists have been seduced by the concepts, forms and achievements of modernity, when they were able to live in Europe, whether to study, or for any other reason . It was then such an experience which weighed such a serious sin that they could only get rid of by engaging body and soul in spirituality, mystery and metaphysics. In the foreword of his book “Freedom in art,” Al Said noted:

I remember with some embarrassment the circumstances that forced me to deny myself, to return from Paris where I fulfilled my studies and discoveries, as well as the difficult conditions that have made me painfully aware of my spiritual healing, so welcome at this time. Indeed, as I felt that I rejuvenated my sensible existence, as I was in offset compared to my own human positions.[2]

Such ideas were, from the outset, an area whose vast surface shimmering reflected postures that were sincere in the expression of a deep thought. But they were part of a cleaved world. This is what emerges from the introduction of the same book, written by Jabra Ibrahim Jabra , when he emphasizes the difficulty of making a decisive judgment

on this kind of writing oscillating between intuition and logic, so as to serve the reader when he tries to detect the coherent and progressive course of the argument. Jabra even considers the style of Al- Said as tangled and confused sometimes, and as painful, dark and extremely dense, other times. The latter assimilates, Indeed, the contemplation of art to mystical meditations which rise up to the incandescent light.

The Arab professional artist, groping in toddling in the 1960s, needed all the ideas that may help him to assert himself and participate in various debates where he represents himself more clearly at the beginning of the 1970s. The artists did not lose sight of the various issues proposed in the debates, including those related to existentialism predominant in the West. They were also influenced by the theories in relation to the historical facts and the psychology of art, from an aesthetic point of view, as well as what Herbert Rude argued about the objectivity of the data and the experimental world.

For them, science and art are equivalent: the first is a set of symbols, while the second consists in a series of signs, and both give rise to brain activity that integrates the elements of the world in the realm of exact knowledge, objectively verifiable, even if the content of the art is emotional. Both (science and art) reach the meaning through relational and symbolic expression. In addition, the purpose of art is to check out some truths and not to make fun of some values. Even more, it is realistic in the sense that it is perennial, as Souriau provides. Art is also trying to create an independent world in relation to nature, according to Malraux. Because the artist recreates nature, otherwise he reshapes it.

So there was a contradiction between creation and contemplation. The divergence of positions in this regard made the works that drew in calligraphic art renounce the visual representation of the body and excessively opt for a purely plastic system. This historical rupture would cut the historicity of the artistic production of its social environment, as if the metaphysical reference was the sole function of the calligraphic artwork. It was quite clear that this function was magical in origin or scriptural, handwritten, or inspired by writing, letter and symbols, including all that many artists have striven to consider it as a style, otherwise a simple rhythm in the style, to achieve a metaphysical intertextuality, especially the calligraphy work.

I do not doubt for a moment in the struggle of the researcher Sherbel Dagher against his own temptations and beliefs, when he took the initiative to publish a book on calligraphy, reviewing its first manifestations and ramifications, trying to fix and to archive many facts. Calligraphic trend failed to provide a stream or a solid school for the reasons already mentioned. He has striven in his temporal option, to focus on his relationship with the spiritual plasticity, the intimate revelations, texts and all references thereto. Similarly, it should be noted that the spontaneous dissociation of the world of the

table painting in general, and those of the calligraphic works, has had an influence on the progress of calligraphy. This is evident in the writings that estimated the appearance of a good calligrapher of spiritual obedience as an event promising new dimensions leading to an infinite world, the world of visible things.

The questioning conducted by Dagher Sherbel really helps in revealing the diversity of ways of dealing with calligraphy. Better than that, they reveal the orientations of the artistic and cultural circles in that time , without deciding whether further growth would occur in circles that had neither participated in the founding of the calligraphy, nor in the development of its ideas and its manifests, nor underwent reactions in its long genesis tempting to assert a clear vision . The world that has experienced a big change provides us with many new hypotheses about art and the function of the artist and his work. It sheds light on the consequences of such assumptions, as the disruption of the supports and conjectures which have designated the art as an objective of the human opinion in general, in the societies that have erased the distances between them.

It recalls how the Arab marginal artist, who produced calligraphy during the 60s and the 70s in the streets of London, became a focus for the British Museum and the art markets in the world. We believe that the wall of modernity has not limited its presence in the field of Arabic art, he has occupied the debates of the researchers and has monopolized the attention of cultural institutions, to the extent that they devoted a biennial specialized in Sharjah, for about five years. However, the opinion has changed significantly with regard to these calligraphic arts. The continuous movement of the art world in Dubai, for example, is driven by international art organizations such as Christie's or Sotheby's or the Art Market and Art Paris in Dubai, which sometimes include a large number of lounges.

All these markets have focused on the Arabic calligraphic productions, have given luster to many experiences and know new names, focusing on the usual means of cultural production and distribution. But the Arabic criticism has not been so far involved in the mechanisms of this rich market of its experts and its agents, in order to guide the interests of customers, especially the Arab ones, whether they are individuals, institutions or banks. This is revealed in the dissemination of certain ideas, specifically on calligraphy, which would later submit the willingness of the art market participants to the principles of identity, uniqueness and the local color. It is an issue about the classification experts, who were ignoring the historical genesis of the Arabic plastic arts.

And when the European productions lose interest in the contemporary era, with the exception of the new concentration of works belonging to the culture of globalization, this trend appears to the Arabic calligraphic art as a heritage rejuvenated and revealing new options. Many seduced young acceded to it to express the concerns of the moment and meet the market needs.

It is obvious that the political, social and cultural circumstances of today are quite different from those in the middle of the previous century and the subsequent periods. Intellectual movements affecting global changes are no longer the same. The concentration of capitals and the opening in the culture and its links with the social changes now interested art dealers. Similarly, the nature of modern academic structures is significantly different, thanks to the opening on the techniques, the new knowledge and the modern sciences.

Added to this is the emergence of more complex issues such as the dialogue or the clash of civilizations, the return of traditional colonialism, intensification of experience, the redeployment of cultural concentrations in new homes, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the destruction of the twin towers in New York and the raising of cowboys who then influence the direction and the options of the arts. All this happens in completely different cities from the traditional city with recognizable boundaries. It would be a breakout city across the big cities of the world, considered as centers of culture and creativity. This is what prompted me , at the conference on " Al- Fourass fi al'Fann " (The Opportunities in art) , held a year ago in the University of Massachusetts , Boston, propose to loosen the grip of the breakout city to free it and get rid of its power, through various human activities. Similarly, in the framework of the international and strategic forum in Dubai, which includes political, economic and cultural policy makers globally, I called for the involvement of Arabic criticism in international meetings, not only in those which interest to the current Arab productions, subservient to the will of the profiteers of the open and unrecognizable city.

I probably digress from my point on the calligraphic paintings. However, some cities having the function of new centers of culture in the Arab world, such as Dubai, Doha, Sharjah, Abu Dhabi and others, have future plans for the polarization, at the Arab and international levels. They plan the activities of artists, institutions and museums around the world, as well as highlighting the symbolic plasticity of the Arab city to all points of view: architectural, economic and cultural. This will facilitate the successful contact with ideas, with new activities in a unique space, perfect for calligraphic production and the sale of its products. It remains to consider the role of the theorist and critic , faced with all the changes that are reshaping the space, the time and especially the Arab man , who remains now torn between two worlds , specifically the tradition and postmodernity still being tested.

Notes:

(1) Habib Bida , Al'Moutaalek bayna al'khattat wal Fannan Talal Malla Manchourat Dairat ' Athakafa wal ilem , Sharjah, 2007, p. 35.

(2) Soussioulougiat'al'fann , trans. Of Leyla Moussawi seri : , Aalem al'maarifa, Kuwait, 2007, p. 66.

(3) Salem Mohamed Saad'Allah , Al'Oussouss al'falssafia li'annakd my baad al'hadatha Dar al'hiwar , 2007, p. 336.

(4) Journal Al'balad " Al'fann bayna'l'woujoudiya wa'assoufia «, 16/ 12/1963.

(5) Shakir Sassan exploit, Al'hourrya fi al'fann , Al'Mouassassa al'Arabya li'adirasset wa anachr , p.11 .

(6) Shakir Hassan exploit, Idem.

(7) Oukayl Mehdi Youssef, Al'karin al'jamali fi falssafat achakl al'fanni, Manchourât Dayrat athakafa wa al'ilm , Sharjah, 2005, p. 98.

Arabic writing and calligraphy: between past , present and future.

Yousri Al-Mamlouk

From the dawn of the human civilization to the present day, the creative forms have diversified in many ways, the most important was undoubtedly the invention of writing, which served as a means of communication and agreement between humans, as it served as an instrument of expression and ideas setting. Each nation has its alphabet and letters endowed with a particular appearance. Arabic letters are however considered among the important and most beautiful that has invented the Arab-Islamic civilization or even the human civilization in general. Indeed, the Arabic letter is not only the preferred channel of the divine message, of knowledge of all the sciences, but also an incomparable aesthetic form and an artistic creation, moving and rich. They interact therein and add religious, intellectual, cultural philosophical aesthetic plastic and optical values.

writing and religious belief

Writing on Islamic art in general, and on the Arabic writing and letter in particular, reminds us that civilization is the result of elements and founding factors that shape its distinctive features and specific aspects that each art has its own philosophy, its thoughts, and its reasons to exist and spread. This is the case of the Islamic Arts, which are distinguished by features, aesthetic features and elements of creativity unparalleled. Their influence has been profound in the country that converted to Islam, despite their large size, their cultural, political and linguistic diversity, and even if their people were unified by religion through the Arabic language, writing and letter.

The Arab and Muslim artist associated the sacred with the writing, since it was the language of the divine revelation and the writing of the Qur'an, the words of God sent to his messenger Mohamed - blessed be He! - And the language in which were written the «masahef» or copies of the holy book. In his encyclopedia «Attassouir al'islami» (Islamic

painting), Tharwat Akacha says that for the Arab and Muslim artist , writing bore the most noble message, uniting the celestial majesty with the earthly majesty. This has been reiterated in numerous theses, in poetry, in maxims and sayings , besides what has been said in the hadiths of the Prophet and the words of his companions. Ibn Al- Bawab , one of the pioneers of the Arabic script in the Abbasid era , writing in the head of his « rayiâ « (rhyming poem in «r») :

O you who would like good writing,

Who want a beautiful and well-designed writing

If your desire is sincere,

Request blessing to God

He thus emphasizes the role of the necessary faith to achieve the highest degree of perfection and beauty in writing. In the rest of the poem, he explains the methods of preparation of the pen, the ink , the paper, and how to be before going into action. Here is the end:

Tomorrow, every man will find his actions

When he will see them in his own record

Description of writing and its foundations

Early writers and historians, as well as the great calligraphers, artists of all time, have left an important background of letters in the sciences and the art of writing. They describe the standards, the foundations, the quantities, the aesthetic and creative aspects, and have been very enlightening for lovers of this noble art throughout the Arab-Islamic world.

The author of Ikhwan al-Safa, writes:

Anyone who wants to make a good writing, to properly dosed components must build his work on a foundation which he refers to as a poetic that it may not violate or subvert.

As for Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi, he said in his speech on the science of writing:

The calligrapher needs several ideas: the simply established, decorated, adorned, embellished writing (...) (Al-Khat al'moujarrad bittahkik, wal'mouhalla bittahdik , wal'moujammal bittahwik, wal'mouzayan bittakhrik , wal moussannan bittachkik, wal'moujad bittadkik , wal'moumayaz bittafrik). These are the foundations, the artistic standards and the ramifications.

For his part, Al-Wazir Ibn Mokla writes:

For the correction of its forms, writing requires five elements:

Attaoufia " (completeness): Each letter must be fulfilled in all possible dimensions : curved , oblique, flat.

- " Al'itmam " (completion) : Each letter must take all the necessary measures : long, short , thin, fat.

- «Al'ikmal» (ending): Each letter must be embodied as it is in all essential conditions : upright , flat, folded , stretched , arched.

- « Al›ichbâ » (saturation): Each letter must be embodied as appropriate as thickness in the application of the pen. The fat or thin parts, must be homogeneous, except the requirements of some of them as « alif », « ra », and so on.

- « Al›irssal » (momentum) : the calligrapher must give up his pen to the required speed, without neither the restrain that haywire it, nor stopping which makes shaking .

He also added that the good writing requires the correction of the following items :

- « Attarssif » (linking) : The letters must be interconnected.

- « Attâlif » (reassembly) : words should be ordered to form a straight line as a ruler .

- « Attanssil » (elongation) : it is a question of where you need to extend the desired letters in an interrelated manner.

It has been also saidabout writing, that if it is beautiful to describe, well connected , open and flattened , with many letters which are collected about themselves and few irregularities , it tempts the minds, entices the souls, to the point that we read it even when it has low words and poor meaning , which we ask for a lot without any trouble , without disgust , if it is unsightly , it repels the mind , displeases the eyes , bores the reader, even when it contains extraordinary treasures of wisdom and words.

The beginnings:

Since the beginning, the Arabic writing has taken various forms, depending on the objectives set by its users and the raw available materials in the environment. These forms include: «dry writing » used for noble subjects on hard materials such as stone, wood, in the mosques and buildings. It is characterized by specific lines, right angles and geometric shapes. There is also the «soft writing» that requires the movement of a light hand and is used to write and compose letters, and to perform daily activities, among many other uses.

In addition, the calligraphic forms, types and names have diversified by hometowns . The Arabs of the pre-Islamic period used himyarite writing from which derive certain types such as the « lehiani », the « Safavid » and the « thamoudi .» They also used the « Anbari », the « Hiri » and the two forms of « Hijazi » : « meccan » and « Madani » three

kinds known about them « moudawar », « mouthallath » and « tatiim .»

When the Caliphate at the time of the Islamic Middle Ages, was transferred to Kufa and the writing was surrounded by all the care , the style known as « Hijzis » was called « Kufic », and was branched in twelve kinds , as noted by Abu Hayan Al- Tawhidi « Ismaili », « maki », « madani », « andalusi », « Chami », « iraqi », « Abbasid », « Baghdadi », « mouchaâb » « Rayhani » « moujawad » and « Egyptian ».

Additions and inventions

Has become the subject of a constant interest, the Arabic script has received a high reputation and a higher status. Big names and pioneers were not content with perfecting it, but they got down to renew it, improve, add and invent new figures. They have been pioneers in this area. I mention as examples:

Al -Hasan al - Basri (21-110 of the Hijra)

He is credited with transforming " al'khat al'yabess " (dry writing) in " khat layine " (soft writing) , depending on the " thuluth and naskh " as said in Safwat assafwa .

Kotba Al- Mouharrir (154 of the Hijra / 770 AD)

At the beginning of the Umayyad era , he invented four types of writing : " Attoumâr ", " aljalîl ", " annissf ", " athouloth ." Ibn An - nadim says in Al- Fahrast that Kotba was the cleverest writer in the Arab world.

The Al- Ahwal Mouharrir (late second century of the Hegira , the 9th century AD)

He invented the types of writing known as" ghoubari "and " moussalassal " (where the letters and words are related) . He also invented the derived scriptures such as " Khafif athuluth ", " Khafif annissf ", both devoted to the type called " Rafi " from " thuluth ", " ghoubâr al'halaba ", " al'mouâmarât ',' al ' hawâchi "" al'kassass ". And considering that the type called " al'ahwal " is the important step in the evolution of the Arabic writing between Kotba Mouharrir and Ibn Al- Mokla .

Youssef Achajri (d. 825 AD)

He is the inventor of a more specific type of writing " al'jalil " or" annissf thakil " , later known as the " kalam attawkiât " which wowed the Minister of Al- Mamoun , Thou Arryassatayn , Al- Fadl Ibn Sahl . He then ordered to use it exclusively in his own texts sent to the Sultan and baptized it as " al'kalam arryassi ."

Al -Wazir Ibn Mokla, Abu Ali Mohamed Ibn Mokla (272-328 of the Hegira)

Al -Wazir Ibn Mokla is associated with a significant change in the history of the Arabic script. He has defined its limits , criteria and the dosages for writing and decided that all the letters would be dependent on the letter "alif " and the circle. He is also credited with creating the type called "al'mansub ." It was then called " al'khoutout al'mawzouna " all the scripts carefully designed while the writing designed along the model of "annisbatou al'fadhila " was called " muhaqqaq " and used to say immortalization and sustainability. As for writing that recalls this model, it was called " moutlak " or " darej " and was used in daily activities . Ibn Mokla has achieved a high level of sophistication and grace in the practice of " thouloth ", the " nasskh " (which was called " al'khat al'badî " (wonderful) , the " darej " the " Rika "and" tawkiât "while his brother , Abu Abdullah Ibn Mokla was so clever and have even surpassed him in the practice of" naskh . "

Ibn Al- Bawab , Abu Al- Hassan Ibn Ali Ibn Al- Hilal Bawab (315-413 of the Hegira)

He followed and perfected the Ibn Mokla method , which brought him a great reputation unmatched by any other in his time. He has developed many types of writing whose foundations were to Ibn Mokla . He wrote 64 " moshafs " (copies of the Quran) and invented the writing called "Rayhani " to write a copy of the holy book which the Ottoman Sultan Salim, the first will donate to Li Lala Mosque in Istanbul. He revamped the six types of writing in use in his days to make them more flexible and more beautiful. It consists in " athuluth ", " almuhaqqaq", " arrayhani ", " annaskh ", " Arrika " and " attawkî ." It was also a great skill in the use of several other types of writing such as " adhahab ", " alhawachi ", " Khafif athuluth ", " almatn ", " almassahif ", " annarjass ", " almanthour " " almourassâ " " allôlouî " " alwâchi " " almouktarin " " almodmaj " " almouallak " " alkassass " " almoussalssal " " alhawaiji " " addakik ". In the 7th century of the Hegira, Ibn Khillakan wrote that Ibn Al- Bawab had, in the field of writing, neither equal nor even imitator among those who had preceded him and had succeeded .

Yakut Al- Moustassimi Abu Addorr , Jamel Eddine Al- Yacoub Arroumi Moustassimi (d. 698 AH / 1298 AD).

He was called " Kiblat Al'Koutteb " (master of calligraphers) . He surpassed his predecessors , perfected and completed the process of Ibn Mokla and Ibn Al- Bawab, to the point that he has become a model of the good writing , and that his reputation has exceeded all boundaries. Among his additions , he retains a sharp curve in writing . He was the author of more " moshafs " (copies of the Quran) . In addition, he mastered the technique of writing six types mentioned above. He will be copied by calligraphers

who will succeed him. In the 8th century of al Hegira, he will be followed by Assayrafi Abdallah Abdallah Al- Argun Kamili , Assoufi Yahya , Qutb Shah Mubarak , Mubarak Shah Assouyoufi Sheikh Ahmed Suhrawardi . The model and his six imitators are known as the "seven teachers."

Soltan Mir Ali Tabrizi (d. 1416 AD)

Known in his day by the nickname " Kiblat Al'Koutteb " , he was one of the greatest Persian calligraphers . He is credited with the invention of the writing called " nastalik " (" naskh talik " in Arabic) , according to Iranian name, and called " Persian " in Arab countries. This type of writing has acquired unparalleled aesthetic characteristics such as flexibility , fluidity and harmony between the thick letters and polite letters .

Ben Abderrahmane Al- Sayag (769-845 of the Hegira / 1367-1441 , AD)

He was undoubtedly the master calligrapher of his time.He invented " al'ijaza " (license) and dedicated tradition. He was a degree granted by a calligrapher of the great teachers in the field. He acquired a personal method that had been inspired by those of Imed Eddine Ibn Al- Afif and Ghazi . He is the author of a golden copy of the Koran, conducted at the request of King Ibn Nasser Frej Bargoug in Cairo. He is also the author of a letter of great value : Tohfat ouli al'albeb fi sinaat al'khat wa al'kitab (treasure in calligraphy) .

Mohamed Hassan Ibn al- Tibi (born in 908 H/ 1503 AD)

He invented the writing called " al'ikd al'mandhoum " and wrote a valuable book on calligraphy entitled Jami wa Mahassen Kitabat al'koutteb nozhat ouli al'bassair w'al albeb , for the library of the Sultan Mamluk, Qansuh Al- Ghouri , and he wrote according to the calligraphic method of Ibn Al- Bawwab . He introduced eighteen types of writing , illustrated by examples , including « attoumâr », « al›ikd›al›mandhoum », «al›mandhoum», « al›mouktarin », « al›massahif » « arryassi » « allôlouî » « al›hawachi » « al›achâr ».

Hamd Allah AL- Amassi (Ibn Sheikh) (840-926 of the Hegira)

He became the first master calligrapher after Yakub Al- Moustassimi and enjoyed a great consideration in the Ottoman dynasty . He refined the Abdullah al- Sayrafi style and gathered the calligraphic works of Yakub , which he submitted to rigorous analysis and investigation operations , encouraged by the Sultan Bayzid II , who had learned calligraphy

with Ibn Sheikh . He practiced the six types of writing , according a new approach , and he was very skillful in the exercise of drawing and calligraphy development. He acquired a distinct personal style that his disciples were known everywhere. He finally made 47 copies of the Koran and many other writings.

Ahmed AL- Kora (963 H , 1555 AD, almost 90 years old)

He raised the method practiced by Yakub Al'Maoustassimi at the time of the Ottoman Mamluks and was known under the name of Yakub Arroum. He had his own distinctive style in the related compositions. In addition to numerous works, we may include one of the wonders that he has , namely the calligraphic decoration of the Blue Mosque of the Sultan Ahmed Jama in Istanbul , which took him 20 years to complete.

Hafedh Al- Othman (1052-1110 of the Hegira / 1642 - 1698 , AD)

This is the first calligrapher who has represented ornaments in the form of calligraphic paintings , which have recalled the qualities and virtues of the Prophet , pbuh , usually in the style of " naskh " (script) and " thuluth " with sometimes, at the top of the table , the use of " al " mouhaqqiq li al'basmala . " Trimmings have received a recognizable form , imitated then by many calligraphers . Hafedh Al- Othman, also learned the six types of calligraphy called " al'aklèm assitta " before developing his own style, and he redesigned the writings of Ibn Sheikh which gave a new method. He also wrote 25 " moshafs " which were distributed to various Islamic countries which granted him a great fame. So it was natural that he became a teacher and calligrapher and provided his art of writing to the Sultan Mustafa II who held him the ink during lessons . He usually had as a student Sultan Ahmed III and the calligrapher Sayed Abdullah Afandi , to whom he gave the license calligrapher .

Mustapha Rakem (1171-1241 of the Hegira / 1758-1886 AD)

He was a very talented calligrapher in the style known as " athuluth al'jalî" and perfected to the highest degree the type of writing called " attaghrâ ." When he received his license, he was the first to affix his initials to his works in forms of pure invention that overlap. He taught calligraphy, exactly in the style " athuluth " and " Jali athuluth " to the Sultan Mohammed II , when he served as the Ottoman throne. He also copied a wonderful book in the style of " naskh " entitled " Hadikat al'jawamâ " whose author is Iwansray Hussein . He is also the origin of the calligraphic paintings of art and of inestimable beauty, as well as epitaphs and other achievements.

Abdallah Zuhdi (died in 1292 of the Hegira / 1875 AD)

He is the author of many calligraphic writings of two thousand meters in the style : " athuluth al'jalî " representative of Koranic verses , hadiths and praise of the Prophet, adorning the walls and the dome of the Mosque of the Prophet in Al Madinah . This work was commissioned by Sultan Abdelmajid who admired his talent. He also decorated from his calligraphy the noble curtain of the Kaaba, sent every year to Egypt. This is Al-Khidiwi Ismail called Zuhdi , offered him to reside in Egypt and commissioned him to this work. He was also commissioned to decorate «Sabil Umm Abbas» in Cairo and the walls of the Rifai Mosque, near the Kala. What characterizes the style Zuhdi is his interest in the compositions of letters and words overlapped in the " athuluth al'jalî " style and his mastery of the symmetrical compositions. He bore the title of «First calligrapher of Egypt», greatly inspired his contemporaries and had many disciples.

Sami Mohamed Afandi (1253-1330 of the Hegira / 1838-1912 AD)

He was one of the geniuses Turkish calligraphers. He had an exceptional ability to practice " thuluth al'jalî " and invent calligraphic compositions and mixtures. He perfected the style of " Rakem " in the use of " thuluth al'jalî " and that of Yassari Zada in the use of " taalik al'jalî ." His calligraphic works written in gold in many places reveal his skill and his beaming artistic personality. Particularly suitable are paintings done in the style of " thuluth al'jalî " in Istanbul, in the mosques of Jankir , Altoni Zada and many other mosques and museums , as well as writings carved on stone in the room of ablutions in the Yaki Jana mosque or above doors " Souk al'moughattât " and others mosques Nalli , Theni Pacha Ghaleb Pasha and on many tombstones. He was teaching calligraphy Diwan Al- Hamayouni and school Al- Andaroun . Many of his followers became a renowned calligraphers.

Mohamed Abdelaziz Rifai (1288-1353 of HA / 1871-1934 AD)

It is considered as the most famous calligrapher and Turkish artist and one of the leaders in the Arabic calligraphy field. He had the skill in practice of all styles and, in particular, " athuluth ", " annaskh " and " athuluth al'jalî ." He has mastered other activities such as calligraphic decoration and gilding. He has made 12 " moshafs " and countless calligraphic paintings. Invited by Fouad the first, King of Egypt, to come to Cairo and write him a «golden Moshaf» , he went there , and once he fulfilled his job , he lived in Egypt for twelve years , during which he helped to found two schools which he directed and in which he professed . He is the author of numerous calligraphic collections including the «nounia» (rhyming poem in "n") , written in the style of «thuluth» and «naskh».

Mustapha Ghozlen Bek (d. In 1938)

He was the calligrapher of King Fouad I and the department head of“ tawkî “ in the royal diwan . He wrote works in the “ diwani “ style , according to a novel method to such an extent that his reputation has been associated with “ diwani Ghozlani “ style , characterized by the length of its letters, their height, curve , their symmetry and their grace. We still retain some of his works, including some wonderful writing style wall “ thuluth “ in two throne rooms in the Abdeen Palace in Cairo and Ras el Tin Palace in Alexandria . It was further charged in 135 H to decorate the «kisswa « (hanging) of the Holy Kaaba that Egypt sent to Hejaz. In the «diwani» style, he also wrote the royal insigna of Fouad the first and Farouk the First. He left calligraphic books, printed at the time of the service of Cadastre. He had many disciples, the most famous was the master calligraphers, Sheikh Abdallah Mohamed Abdelkader .

Youssef Ahmed (1286-1361 of the Hegira / 1796 - 1942 AD)

He brought to light the «Kufi» style and has raised it after ٤٠٠ years of oblivion. He studied the style of a historical and analytical manner. He proceeded to the classification of letters from thousands of relics preserved in the Egyptian Museum in stone, marble boards and written tombstones whose texts were written in the “kufic «. In this task he was assisted by his appointment to the Department of Archaeology as a calligrapher painter, and as a Commissioner of the Arabic archaeological sites. His mission was to preserve the remains, to restore and to fill the gaps by adding to the scriptures and the original decorations. It was for him an essential source for understanding the forms and the patterns of calligraphy, according to the various types and ages. He has mastered the techniques and reaches a creative superiority in the scriptures, the compositions and the specific decorations of this school. He has presided over the restoration and completion of paperwork in many mosques of Cairo. He is also known by a letter on the «Kufic « calligraphy style and many calligraphers were his disciples ,the best known is Abdelkader Mohamed Abdallah.

Mohamed Abdelkader Abdallah (1917-1997)

He established the measurements and the dosages of the “kufic” which are, nowadays, references for all students of the world. He decided, for example, that the height of the simple letter, “Alif”, in the «koufi “ Fatimid, equals 12 times its thickness. He wrote Al’ khoutout al’ Arabia (The Arabic calligraphy) which made the study of the “kufic” more accessible. He is also the author of the entitled book: Al’ khat adiwani, which reveals his mastery of this style that he had learned of his professor Mustapha Ghozlen. Besides, he mastered the technique of the “thuluth” and added some compositions of his invention in it. He was awarded the State Prize for calligraphy, with the great master

Mohamed Radouane Ali, in 1965. Both have also received the Medal for the arts and sciences, in the era of President Gamal Abdel Nasser, in recognition of services rendered to the Arabic calligraphy.

Thus, creations and additions in all styles have continued to accumulate. Note that the first who established the rules of writing in the "Kufi" style was the calligrapher Ottoman Ibrahim Manif, just after the conquest of Constantinople by Sultan Mohammed II in 867of the Hegira. The calligrapher Chahla Pacha (on 1167 of the Hegira / 1753 AD) has, meanwhile, perfected the "diwani", during the reign of the calligrapher sultan Ahmed III, and has spread it throughout the Ottoman Empire. He was also the inventor of «jalî addiwani " style, characterized by the plethora of figures, adding small dots in vacua between letters, knowing that some of the letters of this style differ from those of the "diwani." As for the writing called " Ruq'ah " (also known as : rokâ, rokî), it was regulated and refined by a Turkish calligrapher, the councilor Mumtaz Beck, and was one of the most wide-spread in all the countries thanks to its simplicity, its legibility and its malleability for the movement of the diligent hand and small extent which occupied its letters.

In the light of the above, we reveal the enormous artistic and calligraphic perpetual wealth which was bequeathed to us by these pioneers and many others who have all delivered a message, preserved an umbilical cord with their past, brought novelties to their present and did not stop being creative in this inexhaustible field, for more than 14 centuries until our days.

Calligraphy in the 20th century

In the late 20th century and early 21st , calligraphy reached the peak of perfection and rigor , thanks to practitioners and creators of the Arab-Islamic countries, mostly from Turkey, Egypt, Iran, the East, and Iraq. Its forms and types have been sufficiently established, its rules, its poetry and its foundations were determined. And since that period, calligraphy has been the object of a continuous interest, to study, dedicate and spread its techniques as " athuloth ", " annaskh ", " Ruq'ah ", " diwani ", "persian" and both types of the "kufic": "al' fatimid" and "al' moshafi al' bassit.

Imitation

The objective of calligraphers is at the moment to imitate master calligraphers, pioneers and disappeared artists. Furthermore, are their productions modeled forms and traditional compositions such "al' moustatil" (rectangle), "al' mourabâ" (square),» adairâ " (circle), "al' baydhaoui" (oval), " al' mouthallath (triangle), or composite figures, rarely at variance with these geometric forms, besides the vegetable and mathematical

decorations in certain patterns, or distributed on the corners of the canvas. Besides, the calligraphy painting was characterized by symmetry and stability, with a clear professional performance and great skill, rather than with a taste of creativity and renewal. This method always prevails and it is what we need for the preservation of these holdings alive and prodigious. We are not saying that we must stop at this point, but we insist on the necessity of pursuing the path of development, creation and modernization.

Writing and calligraphy

During the first half of the 20th century, the calligrapher was devoted in full to the study of calligraphy, (standards and foundations), and he aimed to perfect, in the perfect break with the plastic Arab - Muslim busy artist, meanwhile, to imitate models, styles and European art schools, following the example of realism, of impressionism and of all other future tendencies. He ignored almost everything about his roots, his Arab-Islamic artistic identity, the western model and style that was been then the most popular in the studies of fine arts, as they are elsewhere today. On the other hand, many Western artists have been seduced by the Arab-Islamic arts and their multiple variations, such as calligraphy, decorative arts, tapestry, weaving and other forms, that they loved passionately and were their messengers through in so gracious and wonderful works. According to him, a calligrapher who studied in the schools of calligraphy did not find inspiration there to invent, create and renew in this field.

Second half of the 20th century

It was necessary to the Arab - Muslim artist to take a break to gather and meditate his artistic personality, his identity, his history, his holdings, his culture, the reality of his being, his position with regard to other arts. He began to consider the means to establish or to restore the links with his holdings and his intellectual, deep sources, in a contemporary spirit. Indeed, some artists have expected to find an answer to their expectations in one of the most important components of Islamic art, namely the Arabic letter. The latter is considered as a symbol of the Islamic civilization and a common denominator of all its arts, such as the architecture, the construction of mosques, drawing, decorative arts, manuscripts, weavings, jewelry, arts of glass making, wood carving, ceramics, stone sculpture, mosaics, pottery, utensils manufacturing, numismatics, or the manufacture of swords, shields, scientific instruments as the astrolabe, as well as other arts.

All this can be explained by the potentialities of the Arabic letter whose figures are malleable on the plastic level, permeable to all sorts of operations as adding, extending, shortening, entanglement, duplication, symmetry, just as it has multiple optical effects of

plastic order, rich in ideas and visions.

Many plastic artists have also dealt with the Arabic letter as a plastic stimulant, according to pictorial approaches, or typographic, or even sculptural. They neglected the traditional and academic writing, either for lack of having studied and having mastered it by the rules agreed upon, or to use this letter as a simple symbol in the work, to write modern texts inspired by the calligraphy, and convey an impression or express an idea not limited to aesthetics calligraphic.

There is another tendency for some plastic artists that consists of whether processing rigorous calligraphic writing or not, as an essential element in the work, whether it is about one or several letters, about one or several words, otherwise a sentence or even a text, but in a style of pure creation, new forms and contemporary solutions.

In a study entitled Al’kitaba al’arabia (Arabic script), François Deroche wrote:

Nowadays, Arabic calligraphy continues its quest for its own personality, between the respect of a rich and invaluable calligraphic holding and the search for new forms. Generally, there is a misunderstanding among artists and the public, especially after the image has invaded contemporary Islamic societies and has held this status which it did not have previously.

Among the artists who were interested in the Arabic calligraphy in contemporary works, we shall quote:

Salah Tahar

He is one of the leading names of contemporary art in the Arab world. His works are characterized by the depth of his experience, the strength of his influence and his attraction, his particularly colorful style, the vividness of his line, the movement of his brush and his rhythm on the surface of the canvas. This appears in the numerous works where he worked on the word “ houa “ (He). His works combine authenticity and contemporary renewal.

Mohamed Chaaraoui

He is a great ceramist artist. Extremely skillful and he has a particular style, he combines ceramic plasticity with Arabic letter. His works deal with Koranic verses that reflect a sincere faith and a higher artistic skill.

Omar Najdi

He is one of the Egyptian, contemporary artistic leading experts. He shone in

works where he treats the Arabic letter and writing and tried to rediscover the Islamic art through a contemporary vision. In numerous works, it is a matter of working on the letter according to the processes of the redundancy, the movement and the echo, which produces a wonderful optical effect. Sometimes, it is about other compositions rendered in a very personal calligraphic style.

Ahmed Mustapha

He is one of the most prominent Egyptian contemporary artists, who live in London. His experience is distinguished by its depth, its authenticity, and its experimental and innovative character. He treats the style of the "thuluth" and sometimes that of the geometrical "kufic", by using strict figures as the pyramid, the cube, the circle and the square. Other times he treats the natural elements and free forms where the lines sail in space.

Ahmed Khan

This big Pakistani artist combines in his works the esthetic values of calligraphy, a personal style which draws from numerous types of writing, the contemporary pictorial values, on the chromatic plan (with generally synthesized colors), as well as the non-traditional conception and cutting. His work is considered as a mixture of the historical emanations and contemporary spirit.

Israphaël Sirji

He is a creative Iranian artist, innovative and author of diverse works. He marvelously masters the writing type «chaksta» which mixed writing and other pictorial elements (color, size and decoration), sometimes also living beings as the fowls. But writing remains the most important component of his work. With him, the contemporary Iranian calligraphic school is distinguished by wealth, diversity, authenticity and renewal.

Hassan Massoudy

He is an Iraqi artist living in Paris. What characterizes his works is the mixture of the calligraphic holdings (letters and words) and the contemporary spirit. This is seen in his audacious and massive touches, at once simple, powerful style and in frank and clear chromatic dominance.

Iyed Hosseini

He is another creative and innovative Iraqi artist. In his works sculptured according

to the “ kufic moshafi bassit “ style, he treats the “bassmala” (in the name of forgiving and merciful God), or with Quranic verses, or even with prayers. His method is contemporary and includes all the beautiful plastic values bringing together writing and drawing, often in the style of “thuluth” or “Kufi bassit”, and according to modern compositions that rely on surfaces in rectangular strips, in addition to circles and square.

There are also many pioneers and contemporary artists who have treated the potential of the letter and Arabic calligraphy in the Arab-Islamic world and elsewhere. This is what requires a major institutional effort to methodically observe, identify, sort, study and evaluate the production and submit it to a healthy artistic criticism.

Calligraphy, globalization and future

The late 20th century and the early 21st were marked by rapid technological upheaval that affected all areas, those audio-visual communications such as computers, the Internet and mobile phones, among others. No doubt that this is, for man and civilization, an extraordinary achievement that has had numerous advantages: The ease and the celerity of communication between humans, all over the world, the exercised or undergone influence, which enriches and diversifies the cultural and artistic life, as well as the new leisure are made possible by these modern technological innovations.

However, this does not go without certain inconveniences caused by the misuse of technology. One of them is the alteration that the computer inflicted on most types of classical writing known for their specific plasticity.

In the era of the globalization, the arts took on previously non-existent forms. Hence the expansion of their scope, the proliferation of supports, areas and forms of creation; follow the example of the video performance, “computer graphic”, the “video art”, the arts of the earth and the other techniques, supports and compositions. Some of these various arts are sometimes associated and do not force themselves in the traditional form of some specific artistic fields, such as painting, sculpture, the Arabic calligraphy, graphic arts, photography, ceramics. It is necessary to clearly distinguish conceptually and practically, on the one hand, the unlimited techniques and the data of globalization and, on the other hand, the contents and the intellectual dimension.

As for calligraphy, it focuses on the sensitive, spiritual and emotional aspect. It also concerns our inheritance of Islamic arts, so rich plastic and visual values and the push of the feeling of a specific identity. The realization of such moral and intellectual objectives and the use of all means of modern technology are not paradoxical. Instead, a positive interaction between the two is necessary in contemporary works that would formally and thematically be focused on the specific cultural thought, as well as identity. We materialize as well, in the near future a contemporary Arab-Islamic artistic tendency.

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Calligraphy - the Iraqi style:

Living on the edges of the language, dying in its vast expanse.

Farouk Youssef

As known, the painting is a European artifact from both technical and intellectual point of view. As for our real holdings, it is limited to graphic works and Islamic books. (Lato sensu) In the broad sense, it will also include sculpture and mural painting, which is in other words the mosaic. The concepts of painting and museum are unknown to us. So should we treat calligraphy as one of the components of the painting? All our Islamic arts were productions of ordinary life. This is exactly the same case in other cultures where the painting became a means of knowledge among others. Certain artists of the Arab world are experimenting textuality, others believe that art is human and cannot compel the limits of a particular identity. The first of these two conceptions is now widespread and trivialized in the West. As for the followers of the second, they will accomplish the same result and will be confronted with the same difficulty. The artist who sticks to the idea of the European painting will be left unsatisfied, whereas the one who becomes attached to the canvas inspired by the holdings will feel handicapped, what means that there is no escape.

These artists are more or less known under the label of "calligraphers ", in other words painters incapable to bring up their art to a plausible level for the spectator. The calligraphic work is completely different from the painting, because the color constitutes an essential element of the painting and there is only one sense. The good painter will make a masterpiece with the black color; the use of it here has nothing to do with graphics, because the surface is without interest, as we are in possession of instruments that allow us to reach a big cultural depth.

Dhia Azzawi

An ambiguous vanguard

The exhibited works in 1949 by Madiha Omar, then residing in America, and some

of which dated back to 1946, went on the contrary outcomes of the calligraphic theses which will be known in the early 70s of last century. The Iraqi artist had just discovered in the Arabic letter a power of surrealist inspiration. She involved narrative units and symbolic figures as if she had perceived a magic rebellious and creative breath there, a spirit that suggests a kind of invisible relationship with natural forms (plants and animals) that the hands of the painter may improvise by listening to the fantasy world of this letter. Madiha Omar summoned a beauty which emanates, not from a visual approach to rhetorical and spiritual possibilities of writing, but the plastic suggestion of its external appearance, where strong similarities arouse in our gaze toward the associations with other places.

We thus see in these works less the letter as a set of realistic approaches, revealing the respect for the optical obvious fact that celebrates its small miracles. Here, the letter does not have an esthetic value in itself anymore, but it serves as a crook through which the painter conceives the images stemming from the illusory likeness. Furthermore, is the recognition, of which Madiha Omar took advantage as a pioneer in her domain, due to this kind of plastic improvisation completely different from mediocre productions of the folk art. She knew how to better explore and transform this field in a more decisive way than it did elsewhere.

From his side, Jamil Hamoudi, who had preceded Madiha Omar on this path of calligraphic art, was of a surrealist sensibility. On his canavas, the letters became abstract and solid entities, giving to the eye this capacity to exceed the distance between the significant and the signified. They were thus physical beings and not acoustic signs, which were imperative with their hidden melodic concert. It is true that Hamoudi explored a lot the esthetic description of the writing, but he also tried to probe his luminous depth. His experience is thus aiming at authenticating the esthetics of this Arabic sign from a tragic consciousness of the conditions of its universality. In contrast to many other calligraphers who succeeded him, Hamoudi did not think of the letter as a symbol of a particular identity, but as the place and the instrument of a global identity.

As for Shakir Hassan al-Saïd, he is for numerous critics a pioneer of the calligraphy, even if he came there belatedly, in 1981, precisely when he launched the movement of the «unique dimension “, within the framework of an exhibition whose motto was “ The art is inspired by the letter “. It is therefore on this occasion that took place the official announcement of the birth of this movement that would occupy later a prominent place in the field of Arabic plastic arts.

Many artists found a satisfactory answer to some of their questionings, even a magic solution for the problem of identity, which was in conflict with that of the artistic modernity in the Arab world since its beginnings in the mid-previous century. After this

exhibition, the esthetic interest in the Arabic letter was no longer the privilege of any particular artist, but a collective tendency of certain painters who had no artistic poetics sharing. That is why the extent of this growing up interest for the calligraphy made it a kind of open market to any sorts of products, if they were adorned with an Arabic letter.

Actually, the concept of evolution of the art towards the calligraphy was flooded. There was enough ambiguity in the exposure of the "unique dimension", as calligraphy has also become a field where art, commerce and craftsmanship coexisted, what made the platform of popular taste that got established, away from the art that scientists and emotional demands surpassed the spontaneous sensitivity. But calligraphic movement was itself the seeds of its evil, if not its failures and defeats.

Crossed paths

In all the writings of Shakir Hassan al- Said, master calligrapher of his period and excellent theorist, there is no allusion to the possibility of excluding the traditional art of the Arabic writing from the calligraphy. In his book: 'Foussoul min tarîkh al' haraka attachkiliâ fi al' Iraq' (On the history of plastic art movement in Iraq), he even paradoxically considered the works of one of the calligraphers, Niazi Moulawi, as the announcement of the birth of art in Iraq.

There is therefore no doubt that Shakir Hassan al-Saïd considered these works as a local root of the future calligraphic conquest. In practice, he enshrined this principle in sponsoring more than a calligrapher in the manifestation of the "unique dimension» of which he was the initiator. Alone to remain faithful to this current, he saw the other members of the group dissociating themselves from it one after the other. In fact, this is the opening of the group leader in other artistic sensibilities that hastened the distrust of his companions about the future of their movement and the opportunity to enjoy their works in their just value.

What the opponents of the leader had not understood, it is that he had no intention to bring up barriers between the traditional arts and the modern arts, although his works were of an intellectual and technical very pronounced modernism. He constantly appealed to cross certain forms of popular art, accurate, to have access to this historical depth where they drew their expressive and aesthetic power, remained intact.

He found in the works of the calligrapher a kind of sacred, immediate and eternal improvisation. He looked at them with eyes travelling in time, while the others saw only ruins due to an unjustified mix of traditional, populist art, and the calligraphic, eloquent and improvised imagination, at which they aimed, as in the works of Rafa Nasri and Dhia Azawi.

It is at the intersection of these paths, place of all the misunderstandings that Shakir Hassan al-Said has chosen a position, which has contaminated calligraphy. For certain artists, it was an incomplete identity project, which they wished to settle down at the heart of the modernist change of the contemporary art, thanks to a particular, spiritual and deep plasticity.

While striving to bathe their plastic universes in the Arabic calligraphic holdings, they did not thus stop considering with suspicion the productions of the other calligraphers who competed them for the benefactions of this experience. Al-Saïd was the only one who continued to ignore the traditional styles of writing and who refused to integrate his works with a letter drawn according to the calligraphic standards.

An obscure realism

Certainly, the influence of Al-Saïd on the contemporary Arabic painting is considerable. But where exactly lies this influence? This calligrapher without borders was more a defender of the freedom than a doctrinaire. His interest for the calligraphy did not aim at a reconciliation with the holdings, as it was the case for others. Having drawn for a long time his inspiration from the folk art and the paintings of Yahya Mahmoud Al-Wassiti , he discovered in the Arabic letter this plastic source of inspiration which renewed its direct relationship with the lifestyle. He was charmed by the handwritings left by the common person on walls, on the streets, as he now discovered aesthetic effects of the letter in the folds of the nervous, timorous, agitated sentences. This tense beauty, emanating from places of the absence, is visible only with eyes being used to get the secret tension, contained in the words. Did Al-Saïd see these words which he erased? He was bewitched by this realism which consisted of a shape of inseparable abstraction of the place, except through a limpid perception, free from any sense of regret.

And as he went out, in 1966, of his experience of the contemplative manifesto, he felt weary to endorse the habit of passive contemplator and heard henceforth follow a few traces rather than designating a specific fact, would connect this fact with an optical intention, with universal and infinite dimensions. He therefore sought to bring these global dimensions in a “unique dimension”, this theory he has, throughout his life, defended by himself, dedicated and justified.

The reader may be shocked by what Al-Saïd wrote on the «unique dimension”, because this concept has never left him, through the vicissitudes of its artistic experience, since the founding moment of the eponymous group. He spent a life sheltered from any priory formal censorship. I saw him, during his last years, back to the point which had been the subject of his book: Ana annoktâ fawka fâ al’harf (I am the point on the letter). He painted by having fun and, releasing the point of his fixed rhythm, he conferred him

a mobile sound. He has thus enjoyed some benefactions of letters, their numeral values and their mystical secrets. That is why he was easy prey to the questions that refers to the innocence of the letter.

The paintings of Shakir Hassan al-Said settle us in a disproportionate calligraphic atmosphere with that where calligraphy generally fell, that is to say, an artistic movement that served as alibi to the calligraphers to get into the art; a hilarious paradox stemming from two disruptive hands, passionate with freedom.

Spiritual Gifts

Al-Saïd was the author of fascinating literary texts, whose reading brings this pleasure which distracts us from the meanings and the issues they convey. He once wrote, among other things, a text on the raindrop, dreaming of being able to offer to the reader a real drop through his words. His paintings could not have been more exhilarating, as he put all his desire to blend in with his natural being, ignoring the boundaries of optical thought immediately, which imprisons a particular human appearance. He was conscious enough of his humanity to amply become identified from the other beings with which we coexist on earth. This identification was only the reflection of a mythical thought which released the body of its dense material, in order to brew the fumes with voices, colors and shapes that surround it. Such a brewing was supposed to give him access to an identity which would embody his natural being, a being that is defined by its ability to break the shell that separates the absolute beauty.

If the painter had been interested in the Arabic writing, it was thus because he saw, thanks to his imagination, the handwritings adorning this shell, and which inevitably take shape in the calligraphic work; an optical allusion in which the other calligraphers particularly believed, using it as a pretext to refer to the calligraphic current claimed by Al-Saïd.

The latter did not disapprove personally this kind of entertainment, because he did not feel embarrassed at all from lending foreign meanings to what he said or did. In fact, he was up to these rare cultivated elite which admitted that the misunderstanding is essential to any possible agreement. He believed for that purpose that to reach the truth about painting, it is not necessary to have the common craft skills, as they may be the main cause of Wrong Way to the path of truth sought. Therefore, he gave free rein to his hand to make his aesthetic delusions, carried by undetectable spiritual abilities for those who rely on recipes.

This experience of life in the borders of the language is not in the scope of academic laws devoted followers, because it is exceptional, unique, and only it can give to the

concept of identity the sense of personal authenticity and restive in the field of creation. It clears the identity of any a priori cultural significance, particularly what concerned the «local color» and the holdings. It is especially here that appears the clear contradiction between the search for an aesthetic and human background that ignores the simple plastic exploitation of the Arabic letter, and the transposition of this letter with its entire cultural burden, normative and sacred on the surface of the calligraphic canvas.

In this latter case, the misunderstanding appears in the mixture of two doomed to failure materials from the same mixture materials. Because, to write a text intended to be read for its sacred value has nothing to do with the exfoliating gumming of a non-written text, but the legibility of which remained possible. The calligraphy is just another improvisation of this text which does not appear through words and which hide the indefinite and interrupted letters. Some were attracted by this game, just to stay away from such a classification although it is honorable and not harmful. In fact, great calligraphers competed, against each other for a place in a so shady territory, in vain.

Many have succumbed to the contagion calligraphic, Arabs and others. The cause of such contamination is probably the sin committed by the exhibition halls and museums when they tore away the works of certain calligraphers from their artistic environment to celebrate the presence, through false usurped qualities. This sin has given some calligraphers bad habits, like the feeling of a frightened relief, against the backdrop of a desire to leave half-opened doors, in case they would want to find the yoke of rules. Such a riotous situation calls back these tales where beings imitate other more beautiful and see themselves double victimized, losing their confidence in themselves and the possibility of a different beauty. Victims, calligraphers were therefore as much.

A shadow passes

Does the slogan of the artists of the "unique dimension", "The art is inspired by the letter" really aims for them to rediscover the beauty of the Arabic letter? We planned to answer this puzzling question by a trick question, much more naive and more perfidious at once. "What did we understand by the beauty of the letters of a language, to excluding the other?"

If we observe the paintings of the Spanish Tabet, or American Tremblay, for example, we will notice that the Latin letters are present in a remarkable way. But this presence denotes no beauty at all. They are there because they constitute a part of a shape of visual reconfiguration of the world, in compliance with the methods of artistic research, harnessed by modernity. If we consider now the arts of post modernity, we notice that many artists have drawn their ability to say that the relationship with the outside world in certain texts where the material consisted of sentences, words and letters.

However, this material was not an end in itself. Although these attempts are lacking of this poetic melody which we reveal in the paintings of Tabet and Tremblay, but they have nothing to envy them as for the importance given to the language: a place of simple host where we read simply the style of reception that is booked.

I can assert at the moment that the Arabic calligraphic experience, according to its pioneering program, was a way to celebrate the language as a shade which crosses the classes, the cultures, the humors and the visions. This shade had been incarnated in the realistic improvisation of an imagination drawing its strength of expression from a language made by daily, mundane, overused and neglected words, as at Shakir Hassan al-Saïd, or of literary eloquence, balanced eloquence and in charge of rigorous elegance, as with Dhia Azawi. In both cases, the artist created certain contact with the addressee, through a substitute language.

Before the calligraphy, there was no possible language for the painting. However, did this artistic movement included a shape of linguistic speech? It can be noticed here and there certain cultural allusions, but they are not sufficient to validate thetreason trial of the painting that he brought. For the calligraphers, only the painting mattered, because it was the only safe reason of their existence. The written language had added, in fact, an imaginary distance to their own language made by lines, by colors, by spaces, by shapes and by frames. Between the spoken language invoked by Al-Saïd and the written language taking advantage of Azawi, there was constantly a fluvial current of words where muttered the revolt, the transparency, the blessed crossings, the unwilling sounds and the alphabet.

We probably need to refer to the various works of the poet and calligrapher painter Henri Michaux, to understand that the linguistic dimension is not exclusively related to the verbal or written. It is not astonishing that al-Said was interested in the experience of Michaux and he has dedicated an elegy, when he disappeared, while others believed that he has already died long time ago. Although it endorsed the principle of the use of the letter, Arabic calligraphy seen in the ambiguity of the language as a mysterious emotion transported to magical places of narrative imagination. Below spots, there was a language, the same one who lived below the letter. In both cases, the artist targeted an imperceptible delayed speech for language and was made intangible. We probably need to refer to the various works of the poet and calligrapher painter Henri Michaux, to understand that the linguistic dimension is not exclusively related to the verbal or written. It is not astonishing that al-Said was interested in the experience of Michaux and he has dedicated an elegy, when he disappeared, while others believed that he has already died a long time ago. Although it endorsed the principle of the use of the letter, Arabic calligraphy seen in the ambiguity of the language as a mysterious emotion transported

to magical places of narrative imagination. Below spots, there was a language, the same one who lived below the letter. In both cases, the artist targeted an imperceptible delayed speech for language and was made intangible.

A beautiful death

According to the last image mirrored in 1971, Arabic calligraphy seemed to bring a technical and intellectual release. Some think that it has always been a solution to these insolvable issues that represented identity and heritage report. Calligraphers have renounced the formalism of Arab modernity, which saturated the sense of identity with borrowed elements from the ancient scriptures and drawn from the spontaneous life and given the natural techniques. The use of language as an abstractive space, was an attempt to open up another area based on incomplete knowledge in the course of genesis. The sound made by the appearance of the letter was accompanied by a repressed desire and gave the works of Shakir Hassan al- Said a troubled and troubling atmosphere , while the letters elegantly designed by Rafa Nasser reflected on his paintings a light rhythm similar to the one allegedly reflected on his own footprints .

There was a fantasy created by the distance not calligraphers. And as their new art has appeared outside the modernist space initiated by Iraq, I can say that nothing could broaden the Iraqi professional artist as did the calligraphy, even if it leads to mistake many calligraphers who believed and metamorphose easily painters. But it is not hopeless. Because there was worse when decorators are converted into calligraphers, so they had no idea of the problems of art and began to show off their talents by drawing letters decorators. If we consider now calligraphers as victims, we find no excuse for those designers who have opened the doors to a store where jumble enter a confused attitude to religious painting, and contained the values of popular taste their own forms of expression.

Yet, did the solution provided by the calligraphy reached a commercial trap? I think, as any modernist art movement, it is historically over. It remains a useful material for the critical study, a space of a museum that revives the aesthetic memory of the visitor. Arab calligraphers are well aware, especially since the death of their master Al Said, in 2004. And as if he had carried in his grave a few secrets of the letter, calligraphers have become increasingly anxious about the preservation or disappearance of the letter.

The letter was a casual visitor, a moment of the message where the painter does not linger too long. With the exception of his artistic concerns, he abandons as if he get rid of overload. Calligraphy ended its career after giving us the greatest masterpieces, and ceased to be a source of embarrassment. History has engulfed like others.

Part Seven

Oscillation between the language of the letter and the spirit of the form , research in the resultants

Is the transcendentalist culture still an adequate approach to understand the Islamic art? *Prof. Mohammed Ben Hammouda*

The eye, the spirit and the identity. *Dr. Mustapha Aissa*

Levels of exploitation of some Arabic heritage in contemporary Arabic experiences. *Prof. Fateh Ben Amer*

Calligraphy...... Aesthetics…. Limited modernity. *Yassine Nsayyer*

Is the transcendentalist culture still an adequate approach to understand the Islamic art?

Prof. Mohammed Ben Hammouda

Voice and innate link

Has the original relationship between the script and the Islamic sacred been the cause of the consecration of a poetry based on transcendence, at a time when the Arabic poetry was rather based , in turn , on the immanence , and has it associated the elite of the State with all social classes, in a more direct way? Such dedication has a connection with the fact that the Islamic society is based on an oral solidarity that rejects separatism and asserts what Chokri Mabkhout reminded evoking orality :

The creator and the receiver have the same status , so that the government governs directly without much thought to the question or the strict criteria of governance.[(1)]

Indeed, the Arabic poetry seemed so engaged in the " immanent " poetry as if heritage that was its determining reference – since the past determines the present for the rigid societies- point of view of Abdessalem Mseddi becomes quite plausible :

Formerly, when the " immanent " poetic predominated , poetry appealed to the critics after being read by the public, but now that the " transcendentalist " poetic is dominating we feel that poetry only reaches the reader through the critics it gets.[(2)]

It does not mean that transcendentalism has characterized only the writing and excluded poetry. Conversely, it has regained naturally its " immanent " glory , without entirely losing the new metaphysical sensibility. Now it has a new base that combines the original immanence with the voice of renewal. To discuss this new development in the field of poetry with the arrival of Islam , let us follow this short and complete speech of the author of the Muqaddima :

At the time of Madhar , we could become author of " Mu'allaqāt " (poems hanging on the walls) , thanks to the power of his tribe and his status among his people . In early Islam , the Arabs abandoned the habit, they were occupied by religion, prophecy and

revelation. The style of the Koranic prosody had fascinated to the point that they gave up to say verses and to concern about poetry and prose for a long time (...) Then came a period of stability, and they were more mature, no revelation will prohibit poetry, the prophet welcomed it and rewarded poets, we came back then to it with the same credo as before.[3]

So, what is this credo ?

It should be recalled in this regard that the first Arabs, as the Pharaohs , conceived the word according to a metaphysical function, a cosmological and not Greek sense , that is to say in the dissociated intellectual sense of the sensible. They did not think to use pure words; the voice , the tone has been themselves imbued with the spirit of the utterance. The sounds were therefore quite effective for them. Also their interest lay mainly in their expressive musicality. We deduce from that that, for the first Arabs, the voice was an inseparable sensory data from an inner sensitivity , that the use of orality was constantly checking this cultural and general principle of harmony with existence, as a floating, wide and positive design of things .

We understand why the ancient Arabic language gave importance to the theme and considered the possible as a component of the linguistic context. It should be noted here that taking account of the existential determination does not favor the priority of belief in phenomena, compared to the imagination and belief , as stated Ghdami Abdallah in his remarks on the poetics of lies. This is one of the deepest and most recent studies about the issue. The author takes as a basic data the definitional vagueness of the concept, which tends simply to cancel the required conditions to speak about the lie. The word " lie " implies an inconsistent and even insignificant paradigm, reaching to reduce this term to a free sign from all constraints . In this regard, Sheikh Ali Al- Fassi retains a logical option : The lie is a kind of saying, a speech . Assuming that speech , where the lie is one of its classes, can be unstated , it is assumed the same for the lie. It is then a linguistic sound in its absolute sense , comparable to the language of silence and that of animals , which has no fixed meaning, in which decryption depends on interpretation and explanation . These depend on the metaphysical nature of the common referentiality of the lying speech as the nature of the subject matter [4]

As mentioned above, the word was, according to Arabs, naturally invested in a metaphysical function. [5] They were so convinced that the divine is present here, even beyond the inherent lack in the limited language to its simple suggestive dimension. [6] In other words , this attitude to language come from a spontaneous intention that the world transcends consciousness by its very presence . Therefore, the meaning was , for them, a transcendence , a mystery. Ibn Khaldun thought that poetry is natural in any language , it is a "data" and not a " construction " or an invention , and that is in dialogue with the

natural taste , rather than an altered and intellectually treated taste . It is also influenced by its rhetorical foundation: the fit between the speech, the intended meaning and the motivation of this meaning. Fouad Mari summarizes the impact of this principle on the nature of the Arabic poetry , stating that :

What attracts attention in natural phenomena , aesthetic, included in pre-Islamic poetry is its realism . The Arab of the Jahiliyyah did not seek beauty in the meta-nature and did not disregard the beauty of reality surrounding him, so there was no repulsion between man and nature, but Moreover, relations of harmony and unity between the spiritual and the sensitive, in perfect harmony with the general spirit of the ancient classical art.The jahili poetry represented the man in perfect cohesion with nature which remained for him also favorable field for his various activities . A simple reading of the pictures it provided reveals that the ancient Arabs had found several aspects of the beautiful in the real : color, light , shape, symmetry , rhythm, unity , diversity, cohesion and so on. But this does not justify the idea of the match between their discovery of these characteristics and their overall awareness of beauty. Because this concept is not reducible to these realistic elements . The images associated with them realize the vision that the man had of his existence and its relationships with the surrounding world. This reveals his conception of the sensitive beauty and the aesthetic posture he had in this regard.(7) In a word, it is a poetry that cared less about poetics than the satisfaction of the deep and natural motivations. So what was the status of the script in this context transformed by Islam?

Hypocrisy is not written

With Islam , the script became quite puritanical . Undeniable proof is provided by the hadith of the Prophet whose shape is injunctive : “Do not write anything from me; whoever has written anything from me other than the Qur’aan, let him erase it! “Habib Bida was right in commenting on this hadith as follows: Here is revealed the status of the calligrapher and the writer who had the privilege of being some of the companions of the Prophet. It was a religious and political status justified by the need to preserve the Quran as knowledge placed above all others, which was the highest and the noblest of missions.(8)

Thus the Puritan dimension of writing urged to ban even writing and keeping the hadith, considered among the oral hypocrite, though it was a saying of the Prophet. Avicenna discusses this issue in the context of what he calls “ attafkir arrayi “ (9) (subjective thought) , that is a thought that is unwritten , as long as hypocrisy and complacency mark the subjects dependent on characters. And as the character and nature are inseparable, assuming the transcendence of the object, Avicenna, in the wake of the Greek philosophy, distinguished innate instinct and virtue, placing this latter among the acquired things.

That is, it pertains more to culture than to nature. This is why he states that:

The written oratorical messages derive their strength from their enunciation and not from their hypocritical meaning, because hypocrisy is unwritten. The first who have realized it were the poets, whose words were neither based on the authenticity nor veracity, but on the imagination only. Therefore, they have magnified the words and considered the melodies of the diction as equivalent to a part of the subject. This is where they get their oratorical, narrative and other inventions. If the poet had to imagine just with words, without singing, music, complacency and hypocrisy, it would be for his personal glory and self- admiration. Imagination could not also chronologically precede the accession (by the recipient) , and we keeps from the ancient ones only words and jousting where counts above all the imagination of their authors . Similarly, the most common interests , are proverbs akin to the imaginary formulas, then later moved to eloquence, then to controversy and sophistry , and finally to argumentation. Rhetoricians and sophists who love preciousness and allocation in the use of the language are obviously of all times[(10)].

Does this mean that the writing will be considered as a part of the general culture, likely to include an oral tradition permanently bound to the natural limits?

It is clear that the transcendentalist trend results from the dissociation of the spiritual and the corporeal, in order to complete the separation between the virtue and the instinct. Thus writing was invested in an accurate and serious mission to give to spiritual the proper consistency to its nature, a consistency that is less a simple form than a structure and a foundation.[(11)] We recall, for this purpose, how the Greeks had developed the first letters of the alphabet, so as to transform the word when the sound became an image. Indeed, the reader of ancient Semitic writing was based on unwritten as well as on written data; he had to know the language he read it in order to know how to add accents between the silent letters. This writing was nothing but a part of everything in life, transcended the texts, while the Greek alphabet, with its specific letters, was, according to Platonism, of an entirely different order.

This relationship between the transcendentalist consistency and objectivity refers to the decisive role that played the transfer of efficiency therein, which is the passage from the register of things to those of objects, transforming the reflection effect into imitation. The direct relationship with the things themselves that came into reflection, which nullified the use of signs, while the transfer is made outside things themselves, transformed in order to achieve compliance with the objective relations. This was not possible without the use of signs. The story of Greek and Chinese designers and painters, as did Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī, would be here an educational illustration. He allows you to design the transfer as a consecration of the difference between what is instinctive and what is acquired. This difference that allows to move from the subjective

assessment to the cognitive and symbolic register , therefore the use in models:

One day, A Sultan invited in his palace Chinese and other Greek painters. Both groups began to praise their exceptional talents. Then, he commanded them to make watercolors on two walls placed face to face and separated by a curtain, so that each group worked without knowing what the other was doing. The Chinese strove to paint wonderful topics on their wall, while the Greeks harnessed to polish and smooth them as to make a mirror. As the curtain rises, the sultan admired the Chinese paintings, but found their reflection on the wall of the Greeks even more wonderful.

Although it is here just a fable, it aptly illustrates the project of philosophy, that is of inventing a flat surface on which intelligence and many new and original knowledge would be created. This area refers to what philosophers considered as a possible "no data ". Considering its Puritan spirit, philosophy has aspired to destroy the sensible world and was obsessed with the seeking of a consistency which is not "given", but constructed and able to go beyond the void and the existence. Because, for them, it is the equivalence of the void, which is made only of those things whose characteristic is not to be complete signs. The significance is argumentative, and the argumentation is only possible in the construction, which is not feasible until it gets rid of the analysis and the decomposition of the synthesis.

In other words, we must return to the base to establish a system of names. The name, as stated by Averroes, commenting on Aristotle, includes two types, one of which means entities such as "man" and "mare" when its antonym is a compound found in certain languages like saying "neither man nor mare". This least type does not deserve to be called a name in the absolute, because it is neither negative nor positive, it is singular though compound it is and may be among the "negative" names.

Precisely at this point, the Greeks founded the problematic of art, freeing the creation of any sense of sin, every transgression of natural pact, just linking it with the efficiency found in the origin of what Al- Farabi mentions about the contrast between the second type of names between the floating and basing world:

The metaphorical names are neither used in science nor in controversies, but in speeches and poetry. The common names are used in science and in all occupations and all known specialties of tradespeople.(12)

Then Al- Farabi arrived to separate the negative and the void to and justify , therefore, the attention paid to " given names ":

The "not given" names do not mean negativity, but the types of nothingness, like saying "x does not know", equivalent to "x is ignorant." This is clear in the languages that make use of "non- given" names. Because any void referred to as a 'given' name,

transformed into a 'not given' name, by adding a private, becomes also meaningful than the name of this void, as when it is said: «visually disabled», which is equivalent to "blind". Thus, any void without a name takes the name "not given"; the question of the name "not given" is positive and not negative.[13]

In light of these considerations, it is not surprising that the existence of the world become so confused. In this regard Averroes wrote:

The words resemble the rational ideas in that the thing can be meaningful without being true or false.

Similarly, the speech can be heard without being honest or deceptive. Similarly, a sensible thing can be true or false, in the same way as the word that can be understood as honest or deceptive. Honesty and lies designate the rational ideas and the words signifying them, if some of them are added to each other, or separated. If they are considered one by one, they mean neither truth nor falsehood. Names and words resemble different ideas, are designed without composition or separation and prove, thus, neither truth nor falsehood.[14]

We clearly see how the field of concepts itself contributed to make philosophy a great story from which derive the subjective words such as those described by Averroes. One of its most important consequences is the illusion of lack of time, since the time of the truth is none other than the time of the fixed truth and the recurring transfer. As for all that persists in its singularity and its strong specificity, incomparable with the principle of identity, it becomes something like the waste of life, personified by the sensible world. On the other hand, what the extinct nations ranked as this strange which arouses euphoric astonishment by its brutal blatant otherness, the Greeks classified it as bestial. We note that only the Greek art and later the Western art destroyed all formats for the sole purpose of building figural coherences and provide a formal sign-sensitive basis. When the Greeks developed the representation of the being, they have not only invented philosophy, but the separation between poetry and art, integrating the optical poetic values, and preferring the dramatization than the passion.

For its part, the Islamic philosophy was unable to handle the society, pushing the Puritan tendency to separate the spiritual and the corporeal, sever all the ties between virtue and instinct and design the society in the state. In contrast, the Pharaonic original principle is rooted and which makes purification depending on the control of instinct and racing skills. There is every reason to believe that the decorative art is a form of remembrance of the Pharaonic coefficient and the return to the essential poeticity, to the detriment of the factual poeticity. This is even the meaning of objects, as the essences correspond to a positive existence, that is to say, to a general statute permitting to evade the dissociations, establish a classification system, to found a relationship in which the

pyramidal structure becomes an extensive relation, not a model of separation between the natural and the intellectual.

In this regard, the following words of Shakir Hassan Al- Said are closer to a modernist representation than a claim of an Islamist model :

The object and the expression mean, on one side, the content or the signified and the form or the meaning on the other side. This is my personal view that I insist on the definition of interference of the two. I think we can understand this interference especially from a plastic angle. In fact, the art world is basically a world of signifiers where we are immediately faced with the form with all its sensitive and visual data . This form is different from that of writing, theater and the rest of the arts. In any case, these two concepts (object and expression) are only an attempt to make the meaning more accessible of this interference between two different worlds , that of ideas and that of nature .[15]

In contrast, with Badr Eddin Abu Ghazi , appears a predilection for Pharaonic coefficient and for the rest of the similar performances open to the existence in its entirety, without reducing it , as does the Greco-Roman art , in its social and historical aspects. The author of Roued al'fann attachkili (Pioneers of the Plastic Art) aptly pinpointed the link between the Pharaonic art and this existential immanence , when he noted that:

The Egyptian heart always has the same deep beats full of faith, beauty and love, painting the statue of the woman as if it painted Pharaonic statues. We feel there the links we keep with these vestiges, the abstraction made from the names and the motivations of the works.[16]

It is then an art attached to the essences not to facts. Its main challenge is to recover a sensitive consistency and fight against the totalizing conception in institutions and in the closed architectural field. The spontaneous interest given to the embodied and totalizing designs and wonder at all the events in this direction led to poetry to continue to accommodate all symbolic, cognitive and pragmatic works. Suddenly, the status of the sensitive, the orality and the experience is more considerable, for the benefit of individuals and despite the reluctance of their societies.

What I mean by that is all-encompassing experience, suitable for the integrative relationships (direct transitivity and reflexive relations), not the mimetic relations. Indeed, the reflection is not inconsistent with the totalizing experience that is quite possible, for its part, in mimetic relationships.

As imitation and belief were consequential in transcendence, as the Arabic poetry remained attached to immanent poetics. That's why it kept animosity towards the abstract art that separates knowledge from life, and despise then the materialistic cultures. Among the examples that I had personally the opportunity to prove, I would mention the reading

that Abdarraziq Ali has made about the relationship between Islam and history, through a reinterpretation of the period of the Prophet and his contemporaries, where he glorified the quality of the candor.

I considered this reading as a theoretical subterfuge intended to adapt the concept of instinct and charge it with modernist meaning, instead of negative meanings that were attached for a long time to it. The critic insists on the idea that the Prophet was illiterate and transmitted a message to illiterates. Nothing in his private or public life, or in religion, did exceed this framework where illiteracy, innocence and nature are recurring elements. He says in this regard:

He (the Prophet) did not ask believers to calculate the prayer time , the positions of the sun and stars, but rely on their own judgment , watching the movement of the Sun , for example. He bound fasting, pilgrimage and other rites to movements of the Moon that require less observation and calculation than the subjective estimate. Similarly, with regard to fasting, it did not require to calculate the appearance of the crescent and the date of the holy month, but just a visual observation. A hadith says about this: "We are an illiterate nation, etc. " The Prophet had never asked to calculate the days in hours and minutes, but to rely on the sensitive elements which do not admit no ambiguity*:" and eat and drink, until the white thread of dawn appears to you distinct from its black thread; then complete your fast Till the night appears!"*

Today, when I meditate again this passage in the light of Puritanism enshrined by the Islamic order, it seems like the development of a specific option from the cultural heritage, an intuitionistic option where a social pact gets added to the natural pact.

The same point made by Ali Abderraziq on the eloquence of the religious rites is found in Rabi Shawkat in his remarks about writing. they state that:

The characteristics of the Islamic decorative ceramics are based on the Arabic script. It devotes a decorative process that connects all the additional elements in an inclusive unity, yet with the peculiarities of each Arab country. This shows that the diversity of the decorative art contributes to the majesty of the basic principles and foundations from which it derives its aesthetic value. This is what has hastened the development of an aesthetic unity where various Arab styles converge without erasing the local specificities.

In addition, the ceramic art crystallizes the greatest ambitions relating to the national particularities that we wish to achieve in arts and cultures. Various forms of plastic soon emerged in a context where all Arab artists share its appreciation and valuation, while they adhere to global artistic forms.[17]

Thus, for the conservation of local specificities, there was no longer any need to condemn nature and establish an oppositional relationship between instinct and virtue.

Therefore, the geometrical practice is preferred as a means to reach the "not given" entities. Thus, the Islamic world took over the development of a cultural relationship that can combine the natural and the social, the existential and the urban, and the spiritual and the corporal (unlike the relationship based on a pact made in the absence of the natural).

Thus, the test of otherness (social and cultural) was the only means available to the individual to design the whole, in opposition to modernist societies where consists the biggest challenge in a behavioral cohesion and a higher status accorded to the right. So we could say that the cultural relationship is fundamentally an existential relationship, while the civilizational relationship is fundamentally social. The autonomy of the social order can sanctify the function and grant privilege to the relations of interest compared to other types of relations and considerations.

To avoid such risk, the Islamic society has retained factors of ambivalent and indecomposable belonging. The Muslim is both a historical and cosmological being. This is what is reflected on the semiotic aspect of writing where the geometric and the vegetal are consistent. The role of the decorative arts was determined by the relatedness between the urban, the vegetal and the natural. Afif Bahnassi was then right when he wrote:

The decorative art remains one of the most important features of the Islamic architecture. The Mosque of the Prophet, the first Islamic architectural building, was originally very simple and of great austerity. It was a roof made of palms laid on palm trunks. There was no ornament, no decorations throughout the building. But under the governance of Walid Ibn Abdullah and the governor Omar Ibn Abdul Aziz, this mosque was rebuilt from a new architectural design adorned with decorative patterns and mosaics. Following the model of the Mosque of Damascus (...), the Islamic architectural art is based on a design rooted in traditions, according to functional criteria and in accordance with decorative, vegetal and geometric patterns as well as an ornamental calligraphy.

The decorations have evolved to become more important than the architectural design itself. The steps in this evolution are visible in the Mosque of Cordoba, whether in the first part the mosque of Abd al-Rahman I, copying the models of al-Aqsa Mosque and the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, or in the rich subsequent transformations. In fact, in 848 AD, Abderrahmane II there added to it a long extension at depth of 26 meters. Then, in 960, Al-Hakam II, Abderrahmane Nasser did extend this extension on the south side over a length equal to that of the original building. We see in this architectural evolution the progression of the predomination of the decorations, to the point that the mihrab located in the wing of the mosque of Al-Hakam II appeared one of the most lavish of all the beautiful Islamic decorations.[18]

Afif Bahnassi comes to notice that

The arabesques are one of the most splendid decorations of the Islamic art. But their dominance in architecture, especially in the Alhambra palace in Granada, had limited this art to decoration (...). However, the diversity of styles demonstrates the important role of the architectural creativity and the adaptation of this art to the urban, social and cultural contexts in which it appears. This diversity will be a special feature that will help to create an architecture that is both authentic and permeable to development, renewal and creation.[19]

Does this mean that the writing was accomplice in creating a classicism that will impose the transformation of the poetic immanence in a painting based on the external reference? Could this be the tribute of the evolution of the transcendentalist trend of writing into an art of writing, that is to say, into a practice that emphasizes the functional utility, even when it exceeds it?

Arabic writing and abstraction

We can say that the fear provoked by the hegemony of decoration is justified by its figuration fostering, because the model of this latter, is the machine, that is to say, the efficiency does not hesitate not to erase all traces of the instinct, in order to develop the synthetic efficiency. So it favors in regard to the sacred in all its forms, specifically its poetic side. This is why figuration differed from majestic as it devoted the beautiful. And since art is basically a way to do it, its mere presence is quite sufficient to guide representations and options in a figurative meaning. In this respect, we know, for example, that in couches, there was concern about priority of Scripture with a care of an archivist. Al-Kalkachandi writes about it, referring to the book of Sheikh Chamseddine Akfani entitled: Irchad al'kassed fi hassr al'ouloum (Guide of Science)

All sciences are recognizable thanks to signs that referring to it: allusion, speech or writing. The allusion is due to the look, the word is conditioned by the presence of the speaker that we listen to. for writing, it needs nothing: it is the most useful and most noble sign.[20]

Al- Kalkachandi, Sheikh Chamseddine Akfani and Avicenna agree here on the lower value of the voice, or what Avicenna called the melody. Is it then a convergence of opinions about this design that limits the aim of the writer to the representation of the universe on a piece of paper?

To answer such question, the better is to start from the observation made by Habib Bida:

Divans included functions that are occupied by writers and that fell within the sphere

of power. Those who practiced it are mostly occupied by royal correspondence, organized business and various activities. What can be deduced from what Al-Kalkachandi wrote is that the recruitment of master calligraphers was subject to the criteria of eloquence and of the general culture, in addition to master writing as a science and as an art. (...) The status of the writer of the Divans and his repute ware such that no one else was nobler or more essential to the company of the king. This privilege lasted with the kings in all epochs. The writer of the divan was then the exceptional confidant of these kings, who was their closer than all the characters in their area, including ministers, wives and children. [(21)]

What is mostly noteworthy is that the recruitment of calligrapher did not involve at all the exclusion of complacency, or what Avicenna called "hypocrisy". Indeed, whenever there was an issue of calligraphy and calligraphers, we must necessarily think first about the characters of discretion and confidentiality. We deduce that the transcendentalist writing was based, not on the exclusion of instinct, but on the exclusion figuration. Habib Bida, explaining how Al-Ghazali formulates thefunction of the calligrapher, says in this regard:

The practice of calligraphyhas nothing of a simple manual operation, abstract of the necessary qualities to the calligrapher, as depth and rigor. It is not in the heart anymore, one of the richest and most common concepts among the mystics. Links introduced by Al-Ghazali between morality and the technique of calligraphy are not arbitrary, because they are designed to be united, knowing that Al-Ghazali is the mystic who suffered all kinds of mental tests for reaching them to this conviction and thus evoke calligraphy:

(It) is certainly a sensible language, in view to the intellectual environment in which it arises, and the characteristic maturity of this environment which considers the teaching of writing as a practice where the learner manually mimics a master calligrapher. [(22)]

Habib Bida justified his remarks by referring to Al-Ghazali:

Who wants to turn his mastery of the calligraphic technique into a psychological quality and become a calligrapher by nature, can only reach this by exercising his hand to imitate the practice of the master calligrapher, in a disciplined and continuous way, because good calligraphy is none other than this good practice. He should simulate the imitation of the master, sticking to it, he will come to acquire a lasting quality and will be able for good natural practice, after he initially exercised it as a simple imitation.

So we understand the functions of the concept: "heart" according to Habib Bida, especially when one remembers the contradictions between artistic and philosophical, virtue and instinct. Indeed, this concept has enabled its users to devote a kind of dual identity that does not distinguish between registers. The fascination that this ambivalence has had on the artists of the West is due to a kind of baroqueness which managed to

standardize an extensive relationship between what comes within phenomena and what external to them. Every reason to believe that the West has made arabesques a general model for the Baroque style, in order to overcome the plastic tension against the structure of the rhythm.

In the light of this debt to the arabesques, we can roughly summarize the lines of demarcation between the graphic art and arabesques with a clear line separating the dynamic aesthetics from the normative aesthetics. What is curious is that France, wanting to found a global role for its own civilization, was quick to recover for the Arabic calligraphy, its technique and products, to exploit it the undeniable otherness and submit it to the artistic style.

Therefore, since the 18th century, attempts to overall historicization of practices and artifacts intended to devote a conception of the Islamic art have multiplied in France.

Sherbel Dagher posts in this respect :

several written disciplines have sought to synthesize the study of a specific art like painting , starting with the Koran and the Hadiths of the Prophet, and ending with the vision of the Turks or the Persians . Others wanted to study the Muslim painters investigating their attitudes and their works in different contexts and in many historical periods.(23)

There is a challenge in these attempts to elaborate what would later be called the "Islamic Art". Indeed, everything seems to indicate that Sherbel Dagher is right when he says:

What we call today, in many languages and cultures, "Islamic art ", with specific artifacts backed by historical and classificatory discourse of this art, was developed, in previous centuries, in France and in some European and American experiences, and gave its structured form during the first decades of the 20th century. This background found its design and form in different contexts and according to policies and actions largely unknown. They naturally pertained to the Islamic art, but also to the Oriental artifacts, as I personally do. (24)

He further adds:

This search can further be refined if I can do another verification and make sure I answer the following two questions: "Why exhibitions, museums of Islamic art and its great collectors do not show up, except remarkable and special exceptions, in environments where this art has emerged?" "Why, in this field, researchers, institutes and academies who are interested, are also foreign to its matrix environments?"

The last question seems more relevant because it points out two important points: First, the appearance of art is historically linked to academies. Then academies have long been the preserve of the West. On an institutional level, Sherbel Dagher says in this regard and in the sequel to previous comments:

This first observation confirms for me two things: if we rely on our first impression, the situation of Islamic art is not safe. Similarly, the identification of this art to the materials and studies that we hold back to it is done in other environments rather than in its own. It should be seen variable transfers that require at least that we are ensured by the conditions in which they occurred. This is what can be synthesized in favor of questions so obvious, such as when, where, who, how and why?[(25)]

However, it is clear that the role of the institutions in question is the production of knowledge, with the difference that they are constantly present and active in modern societies, but rare in Islamic societies that are so ancient and underdeveloped.

In this regard, Sherbel Dagher began by wondering about the current state of Islamic art materials and the studies devoted to it . He edited a book: Majmouât al'fann al'islami : moukâraba alamia , whose publication coincided with the writingof : Al'fann wa Achark . In its foreword , he acknowledges that :

The Islamic art is now an essential material for many museums in the world, much more in the West than in the East (...) The collections listed are distributed in forty countries, which in itself requires a comparative study: 335 museums and libraries, with the largest number (164) is in the United States , the richest country today . The rest (171) is spread over the other countries. The following comparison shows the paucity of Arab and Islamic countries in this field. For example, there are only 11 museums distributed in some Arab countries. As for the European countries, they occupy a respectable place in the census. [(26)]

It is clear that the French leadership in the elaboration of the concept of the "Islamic art " is simply an aspect of its essential challenge on the claim of a certain seniority, the same one that was mentioned in Sherbel Dagher's words on the role of the French civilization in the world :

In essence, it seems that this concept hides the idea that majestic is visible therein and can only rely on an aesthetic where intuition has a leading role. This latter is immediate, but with this inseparable immediacy from finesse, in the words of Pascal, in particular, who enshrines the spirituality that is based on its ability to transmit and receive, due to its inseparability from the body. If we combine this aesthetic and its poetic and ancient origin, we will be forced to think about a bestial referentiality and the argument of the wonderful. [(27)]

About the place of this argument in the economy of ancient Arabic poetry, Chokri Mabkhout wrote:

The wonderful, we believe, is a total concept that tops a paradigm of ancient concepts meaning the outer beauty of the text , and whose main would be the strangeness , transgression , ambiguity and mystery ... In all its variations, the wonderful is based on imagination.(28)

There is a close relationship between this and the fact that the majestic falls within the domain of poetry, which is repugnant to the visibility and to its values , while beauty belongs to the field of art. This is not only in connection with adequacy with the visible but suspects, in addition, any phenomena excess.

In contrast, modern art bets on overcoming this contradiction and therefore reserves its animosity towards the figure, but wants to impose some visibility to the majestic. What is curious here is that Paul Klee, having got rid of the artistic model, linked calligraphy to physiognomy, which is a kind of finesse that may negotiate with the wonderful, in its poetic sense indicated by Chokri Mabkhout and whose synthesis means the fundamental and the permanent ambiguity of man. According to Paul Klee:

Physiognomy is the fundamental mission of the gaze. It is an operation that connects the vision to the functions of brain operations. Linking elements like body, void, interiority and the basic forms in this activity makes possible the construction of a complexity where these elements interfere. External calligraphic borders act as joints that highlight the raising or the lowering of the surface, internal and external thrusts, evolution and change. Thus a continuous exchange of roles between the external and the internal void occurs.(29)

In other words, calligraphy is not a construction but a pace that, thanks to the void, establishes an extensive relationship between what is obvious and what transcends it. Because the writing movement creates the surface, and surface movement generates the body, that is to say the mass which is a plastic element with triple dimension, structured around the dynamic void, ie, the void without energy.

It is this type of central vacuum which charges the gesture of power and only admits imitation on the artificial mode. Beyond the artifice, the relationship becomes organic, thus internal and dependent on a deep stimulant that resembles the topic to a bewitched being. Sherbel Dagher alluded to that evoking the Arabic calligraphy canvas :

But can we read a short poem as if it were a figurative or an abstract work of art? We do not need the science of the Arabic prosody to analyze a novel. However, we need historical data for the analysis of "Guernica" of Picasso. They represent a reference evoked by the work, although implicitly. Such painting referentiality, which is its imitative

dimension, based the figurative art. What of abstract art which claims to calligraphy and has no reference outside itself? [30]

Sherbel Dagher thus designated the initial difference between the linguistic and figurative approaches, because the first is expressed through the dissimilarity, while the visible is expressed through similarity. This is the secret of the visible when he succeeded his stabilizing mission, while poetry manages to spin track of the floating. The calligraphy of Mohamed Ridha Bilal gives us an example to complete this writing about the emancipation of writing over the artistic style and its combination of the poetic style :

When I write my canvas in the " Kufic " style, he said , I do not plan ahead but I let it to hazards. It is a kind of poem: the poet needs to trigger the first verse, and then the others will succeed. So instead of directing my canvas, I let it take me to the end. But in the end I find myself, despite myself obsessed with the balance shown by all my classical paintings. I feel so influenced, in one way or another, by Ahmed Youssef who stuck to this principle. [31]

It is clear that , in practice , the calligrapher is trying to recover what is scandalously missing today the civilized man : his totalizing consciousness that was, before his access to the social and urban modernity, inherent in his natural being . This attempt would permit to establish a full match with the new environment. Because the man, who has become an aesthetic being, was formerly accustomed to a natural environment where he could see , hear, touch , taste, move, feel in a relational space where the unknown was limited or even nullified . He had rarely been confronted with situations where he would supplement his capabilities of natural understanding through mediums where everything becomes inaccessible to his intellective consciousness.

Even when this human being was dealing with metaphysical experiences, he relied on his intuition, physiognomy and optimism. In this regard, we can say that the Arab painter is more in the abstract than his European counterpart, as suggested by Herbert Rude [32] , knowing that illiterate people treated this ambivalence (immanence and transcendence of the being) with a kind of submission and surrender. This is a context where the spiritual and the physical are reconciled and where gestures of sympathy predominate: love, hate, mixing, repulsion rather than understanding and sociality, as sympathy creates a kind of equality.

Notes:

(1) Chokri Mabkhout , Jamaliat al'ilfa (annass wa fi moutakabilouh atourâth annakdi) Beyt al'hikma , Carthage, 1993, p. 55 .

(2) Abdessalam Mseddi " Chirona al'arabî al'mouâssir wa azaman al'mouthâd " in Foussoul , No. 68, Hiver/printemps 2006, p. 311 .

(3) Ibn Kahldoun believes that poetry is natural in all languages (Muqaddima , Dar al'jîl , Beirut , p. 644-645) . The author says that *«once, he asked Sheikh Sharif Abu Al- Kassem , the judge of Granada , who was a great poet , why the Arab Muslims were better in the field of eloquence than the Jâhili Arabs . He did not deny the fact, so was silent for a long time and then he said: I swear that I do not know. I told him: I give you my opinion about it, then, I told him what I had written on it. He paused, admiring, and then told me: you see, jurist, these words should be written in golden letters. After that, I noticed that he favored my presence, listened to what I said in class and recognized my scientific intelligence"* pp. 642-643. So, what is the content of what Ibn Khaldun wrote and which should be written in golden letters? These are words that immediately precede this story in which the author gave a specific role to eloquence in the transformation of the poetic taste, to make it suitable to what we today call "the descriptive language " : "Here, you see another secret to know why Muslims were better than Jâhilites in eloquence, both in prose and poetry. Indeed, the poetry of Hassan ibn Thabit, Omar ibn Abi Rabia, Al- Houtayâ , Jarīr, Al- Farzdaq , Noussayb , Ghaylan Thi Rima, Al- Ahwass, Bashar and the authors of the time of the Umayyads and the early Abbasid era , especially in their speeches, correspondence, their dialogues with kings , all had better eloquence than al- Nabigha , Antara, Ibn Kulthum , Zouhair , Alkam Ibn Abda, Tarafa ... They were also higher compared to Jâhilites for which was relevant to prose and dialogue . The perfect character and the common sense are also witnesses to the critic, who is an expert of eloquence. The reason for this superiority is that the Arab Muslims knew the Koran and the hadith whose miraculous character is inimitable. They have internalized this quality, have become accustomed to this high style which was installed in their characters, their talents of eloquence were refined compared to their predecessors who did not get this chance, or this education. «P. 642.

(4) Abdallah Ghdami " Jamâliat al'kathib " in Foussoul , No. 68, hiver/printemps 2006, p. 183 . Mseddi was relevant in clarifying the manner in which poetry has complied with the existential requirement according to the criterion of the artistic sincerity. He said in this regard:

It is commonly known that the linguistic meaning is based on three elements which are all active references at any moment of communication between two parties. The first point is denotation. Every human being cannot acquire a natural language and use it spontaneously without a lexical background where each word has a specific meaning which is the extreme abstraction from sensible things and essential experiences. The second element is the context, which is the complex situation related to the concept of order. We, the Arabs, we represent this using the tools that were provided to us by the pioneers of the rhetoric thought, in the golden age of our civilization. The word whose core is the lexical meaning can only mean in relation to what precedes and what follows it in a complex structure.

Therefore, all the virtual meanings of the word retire in favor of a single probable and permissible meaning. The third element is the real situation of communication, since, as they say, to every context a saying. So when we speak of " Dalalat al hal " (meaning of a given situation) , there are three additional spheres that allow the sense of happening : the lexical meaning sphere, the contextual meaning sphere and the communicative meaning sphere (pp. 305-306) . It is not surprising that he criticizes those who accuse the contemporary poetry to be obscure and says it must before analyzing the darkness of the modern poetry, we have to analyze the ambiguity of the concept of darkness itself. (P. 310) (see Abdessalam Mseddi , Chirona al'arabî ... op.cit.)

(5) It is not surprising that Claude Lévi -Strauss binds the instinctive tendency with admitting the idea of the transcendental subject, when he says: *We can speak of a primitive art in two ways: whether in the context of procedural and technical deficit that prevents the artist to achieve his objective (imitation of the model) , and that just happens to refer to this model. This can be, inter alia, the state of art that we call "naïve". Or in the sense that the present model in the consciousness of the artist is a special model that is beyond the means of the sensitive representations due to a personal deficit. Here, the artist is quite helpless. The art of preliterate peoples is reflected in different ways.* (Claude Lévi- Strauss, Annadhar , ASSAMA , al'kirââ (Watch , listen , read,) translated into Arabic by Khalil Ahmed Khalil, Dar Talia , Beirut, 1994, p. 112.

(6) Chokri Mabkhout draws attention *to the fact that the reception of the oral poetry designs different semiotic systems than the language to express its appreciative or derogatory attitude towards the text. For example , the Prophet spread covers Kab Ibn Zuhayr with his overcoat after listening to his " Lamia " (rhyming poem "l"): " Bânat Souâdou « (Souâd disappeared ...) , or the example of*

Ibn Al -Walid tapping his feet to express his joy after hearing a verse of Imru` al-Qais. These two examples show that there is a class of receptor that does not have a rational way to appreciate poetry, appealing the gesture instead of the expression of a positive impact of the heard text. (Chokri Mankhout , *Jamaliat al'fann ...* op. Cit. , P.65).

(7) Fuad Mari, *Al'wâyou al'jamâli inda al'arab kabla al'islâm* , Al'abjadiâ li anachr 1989 , p.96 .

(8) Habib Bida, *Fi Kitabat wa zakhrafat al'makhtout al'corâni , min al karn Attassi ila al'karn Athani achar Massihi , men khilâl bahth achkâl khoutout wa zakhârif , namâthij min al'makhtoutât al'korânia* , National Library of Tunis, diploma in Advanced Search , Abdelwahab Bouhdiba , Tunis, 1980, p. 191 .

(9) Avicenna, Al'khatâba (Al'makâla athalitha , al'fassl assâdiss) text prepared by Salim Mohamed Salem , edited by Wizarat al'maârif al'oumoumia , al'maktabâ al'amiriâ , Cairo, 1954, p. 170

(10) Ibid, p. 200-201.

(11) Averroes, *Talkhîss kitab al'ibarâ* , text prepared by Mahmoud Kassem , Al'haïâ al'missria al'âmma li al'kitâb 1986 , p.22 .

(12) Abu - Nassr al'Fârâbî : Al'ibârâ , op.cit , p. . 22.

(13) Ibid, p.30.

(14) Averroes, *Talkhis kitab Al'ibârâ*, op. cit. p.58.

(15) Shakir Hassan Al – Said, *Al- bahth fi Jawharat athafâni* , Sharjah , Dairat athakâfa wa al'îlèm , Al'markaz al'ârabî li al'founoun , 2003, p. 67 .

(16) Badr Eddine Abu Ghazi, *Rouad al'fann attachkîlî*, Dairat athakâfa wa al'îlèm , Sharjah , Markaz Sharjah li al'ibdâ al'fikrî , SD , pp.13 -14. He adds: The Egyptian artist has never imitated the human life, transposed the leftovers and the ephemeral features, but he reflected the life in the world of sculpture after an abstraction step and profound explanation, to extract the extreme potential and the eloquent expression of the masses. Thus, it was in its human statues, as in its statues of animals and birds. All of the eagle, the heron, the cat and the dog (The Louvre), the monkey (The Egyptian Museum), the hippopotamus (British Museum) reveal the ability of the artist to abstract the beings and transpose them into the life of sculpture. P. 15.

(18) Rabi - Shawkat , *Al'fann attachkîlî al'mouâssir fi al'watan al'ârabî* (1885-1985) , p. 115-116 .

(19) Afif Bahnassi " *Al'imârâ , al'houyâ wa al'moustakbal* " International Biennial

of Art Sharjah , 6th Session, 2002, Pub. of Dâyrat athakâfa wa al'îlèm , Sharjah , 2003, p. 25-26 .

(20) Quoted by Habib – Bida, Kitabat wa zakhrafat al'makhtout al'korâni min al'karn 9 ilâ al'karn 12 Massihi , min khilâl bahth achkâl khoutout wa zakhârif , namâthij min al'makhtoutât al'korâniâ , National Library of Tunis, op.cit, p.198 .

(21) Ibid, p. 194.

(22) Ibid, p. 229.

(23) Sherbel Dagher , *Al'fann wa Achark , al'milkîa wa al'manaâ fi atadawel* , -2 - *Al'fann al'islâmi* , Al'markaz athakâfi al'arabi , Casablanca, Morocco , Beirut, Lebanon , 2004, p . 217.

(24) Sherbel Dagher , Al'fann wa Achark ... 1 - *Annâdir wa al Arik* , op. cit. , p. 7 . In one of his notes, he stated: *I use the term "Islamic art" without finding an origin in the Arabic and Islamic studies for it. It is in the French studies (and European), and since the early decades of the 20th century that it has an origin. Other names have preceded it without notable differences in meaning. For this, I use «Islamic Art» and other expressions interchangeably, just because they are in use. This is the same case for terms such as "East ", "Arab" and others. I had to put all these words in quotes to remind their status explained here. But I am forbidden to keep an editorial overload for the text and to facilitate its reading. When I used one of them for the first time, I clarified its novelty and its precise meaning*. (Idem.)

(25) Idem, P.P. 15-16.

(26) Idem, p. 17.

(27) Avicenna described the evolution of poetry among the Greek as follows: What the Greeks meant by poetry was, in most cases, the imitation of facts and statements, nothing more. As for the animals, they were not interested in them as the Arabs did. These latter poetize in two ways: one to produce an effect, as to make an action or to have a reaction, the other for the expression of astonishment, exclusively. We resorted to the comparison for all things, to be surprised by each one. As for the Greeks, they intended to induce the action by the word, or to dissuade it. Sometimes, the word was used in an oratory purpose, other times in a poetic purpose. The poetic imitation was also restricted to actions and states, to individuals who make such actions and such states. (Avicenna, Kitab Achîir , text prepared and introduced by Abderrahman Badawi , Addar al'missriâ li attâlîf wa attarjamâ , Cairo, 1966, p. 34.

(28) Chokri Mabkhout , Jamâliat al'fann ... op.cit , p. 41 .

(29) Paul Klee, Nadhariat attachkîl , Trans . and introd . of Adel Soui Dar Mirit , Cairo, 2003, p. 165 .

(30) Sherbel Dagher , Al'houroufiâ al'arabiâ , fann wa houyâ , Charikat al'matbouât li attawzî wa annachr , Beirut , Lebanon, 1990 , p.57 .

(31) Taj Eddine Serr talking to Mohamed Ridha Bilal, in Hourouf Arabia , N 16 , 5th year, in July 2005 , p.18 .

(32) Ridha Salah wrote: *the Arab artist is more abstract than his European colleague, since his conception of abstraction is inherent in his nature and that of its civilization.* This deep saying of the world critic Herbert Rude on the concept of abstraction in the Islamic art, he inserted it in the introduction to the catalog of the first exhibition of the Arab artists in London in 1961. The Association of Arab artists was founded in that time by the art students of the time: Salah Ridha (sculpture, Egypt), Issaam Rumi (painting, Iraq), Noha Radi (ceramics, Iraq), Mohamed Abdallah (painting, Sudan). Its president was Herbert Rude (Salah Ridha , Malâmeh wa kadhâya fi al'fann atachkîlî al'mouâssir , Al'hayâ al'missriâ al'âmma li al'kitab, series : al'kirâa li al'jamîi / Maktabat al'oussrâ , 2005, p. 98.

The eye , the spirit and the identity.

Dr. Mustapha Aissa

I

There is a relationship between the eye and the spirit, according to their location in the human body, which would be conscious of itself. In this relationship, a mysterious system of exchanges presides focusing on the body, leading its relations with the visible and invisible, from where emerges what Merleau -Ponty called the ability to view, making the being the place of this ability in relation to everyday life. This means that the contact between the body and the object, the viewer and the viewed, the eye and what it perceives, the hand and the touched hand are key activities of daily living.

The eye does also inhabit the visible as the man dwells a house. Valéry believed that the painter prepares his own body for painting, but the thought of Merleau -Ponty is even clearer and more useful in this regard. He believes that by giving his body to the world, the painter transforms it into a painting, putting his skills at the disposal of things. This implies that it is likely to translate his special ability to see in a second skill, that of looking through the painting, and guide his body into a visible world. In a word, he makes from his ability to view a table.(1)

On the other hand, Jacques Fontanier and Merleau-Ponty agree on the vision of the body and the place occupied by the eye. According to the first, the eye replaces an imaginary body which surveys the visible world, embraces forms and explores the intimacy of the material.(2) It is as if the eye could see both the world and what it lacks to become a painting, but also see what is missing in this painting to accomplish itself. Once this is achieved, the eye finds the painting that fills all gaps and viewing the paintings of others as the satisfaction of other deficiencies. Indeed, the eye sees what is missing and remedies it, because the painter access to the plurality of the universe using the same plurality of his body. He is able to bring additional things, since he considers mandatory to put on the painting what slips in our ordinary look. Thus, the painter is the only one

able to paint the invisible, as the second critic mentioned above thinks. In this sense, the ability to view suggests the possibility, for the painter, to treat what varies in the visual and mental image, even if we take into account the role of the recipient in this ability.

Therefore, both points of views discussed here converge in making the eye a focal point, which follows the variable shape of the world image, through a physical perception, or rather a physical receipt. Then, the eye makes a dialectical exchange with the brain, which is actually valid for everything related to the being in general. If the painter is unique in that context, this proves his particular sensitivity. Even if it is not the most reasonable by the way of acting, he remains the most capable to transform the visible and the imaginary into a work of art where he puts all his energy and his creativity.

So, the eye of the painter is, voluntarily or involuntarily, a tool to observe and receive visible things. The choices he made among these things are coordinated at a radiant consciousness that continues to determine and encode his orientations. In fact, the sensitivity of the eye and the light of consciousness are inseparable for the artist. They confirm the specific aesthetic dimension of the taste and the artistic act. Thus, there is a coincidence between the form and the value, which keeps them constantly open on the successive historical or contemporary courses on one another, as well as on various artistic trends, and obviously on critical principles specific for each era.

We deduce then that what distinguishes the eye of the artist is that he is exercising constantly to acquire a particular style, or a particular view to watch the universe. Buffon said: *the style, is the man himself* (4). This is precisely what highlights the role of the eye for the artist. This is not a prisoner role of physiology and visual performance of the organ, but it goes far beyond this to mean sensitivity capable of capturing everything that is striking in the optical field. So, this role is linked to the horizons of the aesthetic perception and its evolution in the artist. Extrapolating a bit, one would think that some sort of rationality and conscience allows the sensitive eye to adapt to the visible environment and to adapt its method. And it is no wonder that knowledge is in part an effect determined by the look, the translation of the alphabet of the visible, the analysis of its details and its transformation into meanings, signs and symbols.

Sherbel Dagher questioned the sense of vision and responds by saying that it does not only mean to see but also to think about the state of what is seen. If Merleau- Ponty and Jacques Fontanier agree on the question of the body as a whole, they distinguished the eye. He examines the «viewer» and «viewed» in an intimate exchange between the artist and the recipient, at the creative moment, beginning with sensitive perception and ending with the transposition of the vision in a work that reveals the interaction between the inside and outside.

According Sherbel Dagher , Islamic philosophy did not treat the canvas and the art

in general as an optical effect, but it treated the look, it has not examined the plastic space, but it analyzed the concept of *place* and where things are . Concepts such as the look and the place are involved in the heart of the artistic act, so that its signs and its cognitive and philosophical sense are now of some help to understand the Arab-Islamic artistic creation, as an organizing vision of the place.

In general, we can say that philosophy was central for reading about the human condition in its historicity. Philosophical thought has certainly diversified between antiquity and the era of postmodernity and globalization, on the threshold of the third millennium, but it did not offer a decisive solution for this condition. This thought has not ceased to inaugurate new authentic readings applied to ancient and still current issues. In other words, it's an ancient and new thinking at once, different in appearance but which basically remains the same.

This is explained by the fact that the new offers what is different and paradoxical in terms of explanations and interpretations, usually lying in the logical order of the current and the contemporary. This also implies a polemical discourse exciting around the eternal topic of human existence and the solutions made in time and in space. Just consider that this philosophical thought should be instinctive and aesthetic sensibility of the man, the essential difference obvious and logical views, about artistic products.

In the same context, philosophy considered conscience, reason and freedom as obvious and necessary data for the completeness of the man's relationship with his environment. So it took multiple and diverse paths to question its ability to adapt to things, or rather the transformations of reality. The artistic act interfered here as one of the methods of authentic adaptation. If the physiological nature of man is static, his reason, by contrast, changed by the novelties and the contexts of civilization since the very early time until now.

The evocation of these dimensions is justified by our conception of the creator posture and our perception of his work as a structure in which form, content and aesthetic context complement. Thus the artist offers a perfect image of their actions, first as a value in itself, then as an image of the essence of man's existence and his intellectual and artistic vision.

The latter seems to have long been much less a single image plane than a component of a «multidimensionality», both heterogeneous and homogeneous. Hence, the magnitude of the work homogeneity can attest to the pleasure that the artist suffers in the paradox. However, the extent of its heterogeneity can show the gaps between the multiple dimensions.

On another level, a large specialized culture will play an essential role which will add value to the innate talent, which has been the subject of major studies of the humanities,

besides that the artist has a sensitive eye and mental structure organized, clear, dynamic and thirsty enough for broader horizons for glowing imagination.

II

Regarding the choice of our object of study, it may be noted that, for us, the physiological and psychological hold very close relationship between them. Psychological structure determines, to a certain degree, the individual features that are the basis of the differences in vision, perception, understanding, action and reaction. There are two issues here whose interest lies fundamentally in the Arab-Islamic social structure, which is very extensive and permeable to geographical, historical, cultural, social possibilities and probably all kinds of determinant factors in the nature of the society. Is it possible to establish a specific art on a geographical, religious or political affiliation? Are there other more crucial aspects that contribute to the foundation of such aesthetic structure?

Obviously, none of the elements mentioned above are likely to establish a specific and isolated art, because its influence on the work would be negligible. In contrast, the conjoining and the interaction of all these factors make the idea conceivable, although one of them may predominate. We will check it from some of the ancient arts, where an exclusive presence of one of these elements reveals an aesthetic that is cut off from a context, underdeveloped and inconsistent, according to the principle of the exercised or sustained influence. The example of ancient Egyptian art or that of the Levant might illustrate the specificity of the aesthetic vision where the artistic structure is determined by the descent of religion and politics. However, this structure will not be a vision of the disarticulated elements, as soon as we explore the genius of the place, to which Jamal Hamdan adheres. This is a thesis that is fundamentally based on the geographical position of Egypt, and according to which the transformation of the Egyptian art is conditioned by the perennial predominance of a single element, which has an art marked by the Greco-Roman influence, till later periods.

In this perspective, Étienne Souriau(7) questioned the assumption of a radical and profound transformation in the aesthetic sensibility, because it is an impossible assumption in reality. We must instead believe in the variation of requirements, depending on the circumstances. On the other hand, the aesthetic need of individuals lies in the motivation or the fascination that sometimes lead us to visit the Louvre or the Musée d'Art Moderne, or even to buy a disc, a collection of poetry and so on. In fact, the aesthetic is defined through its ancient and modern history, being conditioned by a specific environment, time and general context. This means that an essential aesthetic need constantly encourages man to act, to express himself and, at the same time, to develop and renew art and things.

Therefore, the aesthetic need combines the individual and the collective

motivations, but is only accomplished through a collective sense. We conclude from that that the aesthetic remains closely linked, firstly, to the individual dimension, in which culture plays an important role in the determination of the orientation of interests, and the updating of the personal imagination. Therefore, if we do not admit, hypothetically, the radical transformation of our aesthetic sensibility, it is through the accumulation of this, or rather its stability that we can see the positive transformation of the aesthetics in the emergence of personal tendencies, intense enough to generate a collective artistic movement.

To this latter case belong many artistic styles that have succeeded one another in the history of art, especially during the Christian era. Styles emerge with individuals who have not been cut off from the spirit of their time. So, they have somehow recorded echoes, without renouncing their commitment to the overall pace. The influence of their researches and their experiences made them pioneers and artists of the first degree.

It is as if the binary art / reason played its important role as soon as it comes into action, from individual experiences that are distinguished by the qualities of the unveiling, the deduction and the action. It would be permissible to illustrate these words with the experiences of famous artists of the stature of Leonardo Da Vinci, Picasso and Marcel Duchamp, who were great pioneers in their eras.

This argument probably requires more attention to read, between the lines of the researcher, the truth of this aesthetic feeling, specific of the Arab world, suffering for a long time from the dispersion and the disparity of paths. While having a specific aesthetic for centuries, and after a long decline, the Arab world continued to seek what he has lost of his identity and his artistic richness. Let us readdress the question raised by one of the Arab critics: «Do we need, here and now, to establish an Arabic aesthetic? » for us, we may add « Why precisely an Arabic aesthetic? » In other words, can't we practice another aesthetic that does not belong neither to our space, our culture, nor our historical memory? Do These elements represent these beacons, these influential factors that lead to a specific aesthetic?

These questions mean, to a certain degree, that there are actually pretty efficient factors and changes so that we can develop a pure and specifically Arabic aesthetics. Maybe then, we would be entitled to ask about the essence of this aesthetic, its objectives, its coefficient of purity and its degree of belonging to our culture. If the contemporary Arabic art is already closely linked for over five decades to the Western art, will it find in calligraphy plenty of scope to develop our uniqueness in the field of art and elsewhere? In addition, we must ask whether it is realistic to believe in the possibility of pure aesthetics, this purity which is specific to a language, culture, race or religion.

We cannot, in this case, ignore any deep history of a civilization that does not spread

in all Arab countries on the same scale. In addition, some of these countries have a history that goes back to different eras and civilizations, extremely ancient compared to the Islamic era. Egypt, for example, was Pharaonic then Christian; Iraq was Sumerian then Assyrian, the Levant was Canaanite, Sudan witnessed a time of African and pharaohs at once. Links between the Arab world and these ancient civilizations are not dead, they are rather still alive, through what they have left to us as a heritage, languages and beliefs rooted in us and sometimes rising to the surface to occupy a period of our present time.

At this point, we must have an interest in the oral and written language as a discourse and a means of communication, in the use of subjects belonging to the same society. It consists of signs, symbols, meanings and connotations that are not absolute, but defining the essence of visible things, although its alphabet gravitates in the deictic, metonymic, metaphorical and figurative fields, that do not allow the ambiguity as the plural interpretation of the meaning may suffer. It is thus understood that any mother tongue carries with it, to some extent , traits that make it distinguished and particular .On the other hand , the history of civilizations is not lacking attempts to find links between the various artistic , literary and visible activities. This goes back to the Pharaonic civilization, whose hieroglyphic alphabet is a mixture model of keywords and images. This same mixture can be found today in Chinese ideograms which amazed the poet and critic Ezra Pound. In fact, the hieroglyphic arts highlight the equivalence between the natural, cultural, visible and written. Recognizing the similarities between the visible and the written is like trying to perceive what is slipping to the reason, and that does not impose to the context a modeled reading, but helps the reader to reinvent a system of rich signs.

To be more precise, we must postulate the extreme importance of the conjoining of the eye and the mind, especially if we start from the progress of the Arabic calligraphy, since the middle of last century up yo the contemporary experience. Is there really a specific thought it has adopted since its inception? Is there a particular aesthetic value it has implemented as an artistic act, style, trend or phenomenon that has imposed a vision in the field of art, for a certain period? Have its effects gradually disappeared due to multiple considerations or because of influences opposed to its vision?

Arabic calligraphy is located halfway between the style, trend and phenomenon. In the first case, it bases its existence as a conscious act of the historical context of its genesis, its epoch and his project. This signifies that this aesthetic inspired by the letter and the Arab script should generate in a different time frame. However, its quality of the phenomenon lies outside history and submit it to the logic of the ephemeral, evanescent and without influence, if we consider it as an art form that falls within the modern art, the model of the concerned eye, the complex and the disturbed mentality at the same time.

The binarity that interests us, that is to say, the eye and the mind, are initially confined to the relationship of the aesthetic form with the written and spoken language. It is considered a support framing interactions inevitably occurring between the visible form and its meaning, or signs, in accordance with an important rule which considers language as a mold where culture is reflected, and an instrument of thought which stops an image of the world and its laws.(10) There is perhaps a position in favor of the language, without breaking with the spirit of the artistic form and its modern aesthetics.

In his book entitled: Eye and Mind, Merleau- Ponty confirms several possibilities for the relationship between these two faculties. Our choice of this binarity as an object of reflection aims obviously less to plagiarize a great philosopher than to study, from this perspective, the scope of the Arabic calligraphic experience and verify the specificity of its vision where the letter is a lever supposed to achieve such purpose.

The Arab experience had to separate the experiences from one another and not imitate them. Some of its supporters, designers and theorists chose this position, while others, while claiming this movement, considered it as an extension of the Western experience.

Thus, according to Kamal Balata, calligraphy was the best way to dialogue with the other, namely the Western, or imitating his art. Our choice of the binarity eye / mind aims therefore to confirm both orientations. The first highlights the acute awareness of the Arabic calligrapher, seeking to revive his own memory and to draw into his aesthetic heritage, while the other tries to denigrate this option.

Thus, the contradiction lies in the fact that the Arab artist has the audacity to implement his art, thanks to his eye and mind, focusing on the letter as a sum of its cultural, historical, social and aesthetic heritage, but if it claims to renew itself, the same structure and the same mind represent it before the other, without a significant change. Here appears likely the problem of the Arabic calligraphy canvas and its commercialized forms under various trends.

According to the system of signs which Marie Thérèse praised, eye and mind jointly contribute to the enhancement of the human knowledge. Since the dawn of time, it has been realized thanks to the carving on the stone, or on the bones of dead animals, or on papyrus ... and today by other ways that bring the new and celebrate inventions. In sum, the course of this evolution constantly combines vision, consciousness, language and art.

This is a basic cultural structure that joins the knowledge of the visible and the written. Ancient languages such as Pharaonic hieroglyphs had in them what distinguished the forms and the contents. Similarly, the Latin language has made possible various variations and meanings distributed between French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, German and Italian, sharing the same letter forms. Arabic, being resulted of various

dialects, became the unified language of Islam.

So, does the problem lie in the letter itself or in one of its meanest? It is undoubtedly in the meaning and the connotation that designate a specific object or a being with special features, which inevitably produces differences in pronunciation. Such definition will allow a representation easy to design and to understand, when we proceed to the separation of the eye and mind, apart from their complementarity imposed by the nature of man and his awareness of similarities and dissimilarities between the visible things.

The same problem arises with regard to the Arabic language, in the distinction between the similar curved lines and the straight lines of the letter, or between the upper and lower positions of the points, and between different forms of all alphabetic characters. It finally arises for the polysemy of words in relation to eloquence and interpretation. The visible form has been linked to its meaning in the unconscious, probably even before this latter had the responsibility to link the form and the substance for the intellectual faculty of man.

We would also be interested in the essence of this meaning with respect to the issue of identity. We will then specify the subject of our discussion, namely the study of both identities, that of the eye and that of the mind, based on the complementarity and the harmony between them, leading to the identity of the man (individual and part of a whole) and leading finally to the identity of the part itself, composed of parts.

For us, this approach will design a pretty different orientation. The ego identity characterized as an individual will be different from that of the other also individuated, which makes the difference between the two fatal, in the same details and the most unique elements. This also implies that the identity of the mind (both individual and common) can be seen as a historical reference covering everything that belongs to civilization , knowledge and the minutiae of the quest of man, intended to give a sense to his existence as a distinct being from all others.

The logic itself is conceived, logically, as a mental operation based on relations, results and creations, as philosophy is divided in derivatives lost in an invisible maze, and giving to the visible things intangible dimensions to the eye, medicine and physics.

As a result, identity is no longer that which does not appear to us and which is not embodied. It is in the order of the symbol and metonymy. So, it depends on the linguistic eloquence and the interpretation of the actions' meaning. It becomes, moreover, a signifier not just a signified (in linguistics terms) but we experience it -- something of which we are aware just like the clothes we wear.. So we behave as beings who, along with the others, possess identity accounts, similar to the bank accounts, with different and unequal values.

So, we just need some spirit to represent identity as a groupal philosophy, which does not need to be philosophically thoroughly reviewed. Yet we continue to treat it as well, because it is inseparable from the social, the cultural, the artistic, the economic, the religious and the political, where raises the question of the destiny of nations, small are or large .

In a less important context, identity is also how to deal with our disputes, in order to agree on common decisions and solutions, depending on the gains and losses. It has a strategic and ideological dimension that fits the cultural and the artistic aspects.

In reality, it is not for us to theorize about the concepts, because it is beyond our powers, but philosophy here is our resort and instrument for understanding aesthetics in its relations with the concepts: eye, spirit, identity and language. However, let us think about language in all its structural and cognitive scale, or is it just this space that makes possible the explanation and the interpretation of a sort of shape like the plastic art?

Finally, the art will be conceived in its particularity as a host for creating languages that are precise and attached to their content, their life and their form: poetry, prose, music, plastic arts, and performing arts. However, qualitative categories continue, to produce these relationships based on common subject, rhythm, balance, formal structure and other structural elements of the artistic work. Note that there is a Latin maxim meaning that Western civilization seeks to create a continuum between the different literary and visual arts: ut pictura poesis (what is pictorial is poetic).And on another level, there are connections between the various arts. This is what led painting and literature to share the same aesthetic function which is description, what has pushed them to focus on the sense of sight rather thanthe other senses.(11)

It is perhaps a truism generated by a current conviction. We will probably also discover that the privilege granted to the eye is due to the rationalist mentality. What delineates the specific arts is the visual language, which uses methods and tools that are largely specific, despite the continuum of the surface. That is why the pictorial language remains different of poetry from our vision of the technique, the practice and the aesthetics of the specific image, and based on our perception of the visual language and the non-visual language.

All this reminds us that the letter and the aesthetics of the Arabic script denoted, among the ancients, that interest given to the mind as to the particular beauty of the word. It is also found in the pluriform understanding of the letter embodied by the styles said «Kufic», «diwani» «thuluth» or others , and what they have inspired as variants and formal derivatives .

III

Then there is a way that will allow us to examine the causes which are behind the choice of the Arab artist, for whom calligraphy is an art form or style that is not overly transcendentalist. This form is legible, if not derived from the oral and written language, intended to convene its history in the color space. The artist travels widely, in a newfoundland that is unfamiliar to the denotations and connotations of the language, reserved for a defined meaning, which is hidden in the mist of the metaphors, metonymies and other figures of the rhetoric and the literary art.

Marie Thérèse says:

In reality, the concept of comparative studies of arts is no more what it was in previous eras. Previously, the affirmation of a common denominator between the arts aimed to focus on their ability to imitate. However, today, the arts are connected at the base of their semiotic equivalence and the equality of their capacity to imitate the reality, whether it is immanent or transcendent. Similarly, none of them is no longer considered to be the most natural and most artificial than the others.[12]

Is it therefore an analysis of the relationship between literature and art? This is obvious, because the signifier and available patterns are numerous. Dadaism, for example, has made at once from the letter and the form the tools of an absurd poetry, focusing on unrestricted repercussions, which will open subsequently horizons identical to surrealism, then both will set up the story of a calligraphy that is less concerned with the signifier and the signified by the formal language.

In the same perspective , we can recognize in Paul Klee , Picasso and Braque calligraphers who do not use the letter as it is or for its linguistic function. There are in their work relationships with the aesthetics of the arts of the Far East whose script has foundations dating back to the symbolic and synthetic forms of nature. Nevertheless, we cannot say that there is intentionality among artists inspired by a particular philosophy. It begs the question of the western calligraphy as a purely plastic art related to the language of the abstract art, and not inspired by the literary discourse or any other form of discourse.

Ultimately, the free writing of the Dadaist poetry remains an absurdist state and independent from the thematism and the vision which is called the calligraphy practiced by Isidore Isou , Filippo Marentini, Paul Klee and others. Need we to recall the position of Kandinsky who reveals his vision of beauty in its “ reverse portrait “, which gives the spirit its dynamism and the imagination its incandescence , besides what he called an “inner necessity” of art? This is actually more fundamentally related to the emotion that the creative act and its effects that bring the canvas give to its artistic independent essence of the artist himself.

Consequently, what we would consider now is this distance of motivation, ie this indistinct line between the eye and the mind. Western experience took the first steps in the manipulation of the visual and the written , in a vision recognizing that writing is a plastic activity that develops on the surface of the text. Obviously, this writing is a set of pictorial motifs in which there is no difference between the pen and the brush. The media are not an end in themselves, but an autonomous material to whom the artist gives the possibility to confide its own essence to the flat surface of the canvas.(13)

We already had the opportunity to ask the question about the purpose of this new aesthetic experience initiated by the Arabic calligraphy, and proposed to use the eye and the mind according to entirely different considerations. We rely, in this sense, on the distance and the extraordinary difference in the artist between the conscious desire to represent the visual things and his unconscious desire to express his inner thoughts. This means that the designer is gifted to devour the universe with his eyes.(12) Indeed, the eye surprises us, in most cases, by its avidity of a contradictory formal aesthetic with what is fixed and stable.

Even if , logically , nothing says that only the geographical factor determines the separation between the material and the spiritual -specific elements of the human being - or favors one of the two , some people limit spirituality to Eastern societies and materialism to the West. Then, the orientalist experience of Kandinsky is explained by its spiritual sensitivity and the principle of "the inner necessity" that he defends. At the same time , he may have a vague image of the magic of the Orient and its spirituality that date back to ancient history , accompanied by philosophical interpretations , beliefs and many successive religions crowned by the revealed religions . The image of the divine unity that is reiterated by the three revealed religions and was further strengthened and raised by the apotheosis of Islam.

So it became logical that the Islamic art is the colour-bearer of its religion and expresses through it a philosophy which gives priority to the spiritual over the material in relation to the visible things in its environment. What was the reason for the spiritual quest of Kandinsky would be an internalized and personal feeling without being directly related to the characteristics of Islam.

However, there are many signs showing the sensitivity of the eye and the brightness of the mind, especially when it comes to picking the elements conducive to the spiritual renewal of the man. Thus, we can say that artistic Orientalism provided a first passionate initiative inspired by the oral, fictional and recurrent literature, as in the *One Thousand and One Nights*. It was followed by other initiatives that embodied this interest in the novelties of the East, ranging from the artistic representation of its fascinating light up to

the imitation of its arabesques and its calligraphy. However, the actual experience does not prove that calligraphy was one of the factors of this fascination among the Orientalist artists, or those who have been influenced by the Chinese script, like Paul Klee.

We then conclude that the goal of the western abstract artist is none other than the pure abstraction that commits him to get rid of the pictorial representation and inventing appropriate techniques to new expressive forms. This is what: *moved the interest of the world representative art towards an autonomous art. The subject has lost its place, otherwise, it was considered in another vision that transformed synthesized and sometimes distorted it. It is probably this movement of the aesthetic interest pushed some to revise the entire history of art, especially that the abstract art is imposed in relation to the figurative art as an opposite pole, artistically well received, and the immanent meaning of the form became the artistic purpose.*(14)

There is an abstraction that basically falls within the faith in the Islamic arts, and which allows us to study Arabic script in its light, to recognize it as a specific and paradoxical artistic form, adopting design principles that organize the relations between things and reformulated them. The basic aesthetic principles here are those who are interested, not in the representation and the imitation of the visible world, but the explanation and the expression of the abstract forms. In this regard, any sense of harmony and cohesion in this new art is the indirect expression of the notion of unity in multiplicity and vice versa, that lies behind things as well as in the phenomena. This is what deprives the script of its own values as an artifact, and as a component of the complex and confusing overall cohesion for the eye. The ultimate goal is to achieve a mystical spirituality without borders, meaning, inter alia, the oneness of God, latent in the infinite multiplicity of the universe.

Are there any differences between the Eastern abstract art and Western abstract art? This question may refer us to Kandinsky and his principle of *the inner need*. But we cannot pretend to affirm the resemblance between the two, from a single mental or spiritual source. We admit a difference included in the structure of the relationship between the eye and the mind. In other words, we say that the civilizations bear their distinguishing features and man constantly carries them in his soul and spirit. The appearance of the trend of the abstract art with the western artist will therefore remain something special. His mind and his spirituality make him facing the aesthetic discovery that belongs to him, and in line with his ambitious experimental and scientific mentality.

As for Arabic calligraphy, it seems surprising as can be the rediscovery of self. We can even read it as a plagiarism of the other, at least his imitation, which devalues it somehow. We have the impression that the rediscovery of self in the Arabic artistic expression seems doomed to go through the model of the other.

The memory of the Arabic calligrapher is certainly filled with these visible things of its environment: mosque, habitat, manuscripts, miniatures,.. many vestiges that confirm historically an abundance of riches. In this situation, the rediscovery of the self by the artist drawing on the abstract model of the other seems impure. Because he puts his identity and his being in the mold of the western experience, rather than in his own mold.

We will not go further, because we believe in the sincerity of the artist at his creative moment . The calligraphic art would thus be a gateway or a window for the Arab calligrapher, to rediscover the world in the contemplation and in new experiences. Here we can return to a question Sherbel Dagher, in relation to previous questions that need answers. What unites the cognitive unveiling and the chromatic enunciation?

That is the fundamental question that Al Said answered in his plastic experience. The examination of this experience is the natural approach of calligraphy.(17)

It is as if the essence of this experience was suspended at the borders of the cognitive study before being linked to the imitation of the abstract art of the other , that is to say, that it will be the quest of a plastic aesthetic that it will not strive neither for passion nor mysticism. Can we determine here a parameter of the Arabic calligraphic experience based on the vision of Shakir Hassan Al- Said, who defines it as a personal tendency to mysticism, or ignore it totally? Can we also exclude from the Arabic aesthetic identity all that relates to the principle of intentionality among Al Said ?

The latter presents an explanation of the relationship between the cognitive and its calligraphic practice in which it is a personal experience probably unique. He found in the mysticism a motivation to paint, he says :

Disclose all aspects of the truth , adopt a new truly human vision which may show its being as a universal existential phenomenon , more than a mere human phenomenon(18)

Sherbel Dagher proposes a model that quite close to that of Al- Said. Indeed, the Iraqi Jamil Hammoudi reminds it as follows:

The moment when I had the idea to get inspired by the Arabic letter in my work was like a moment of prayer and divine invocations for my soul terrified by the gap left by the European life. So my commitment to the spiritual values which affirm the authentic links of my life with my civilization and my culture is crystallized in the Arabic letter . It is the noblest and most sacred sources where I can quench my thirst to express myself and create, clinging myself entirely to the history of my country and producing in the field of the modern design that any contemporary artist dream about.(19)

Is it therefore a personal religious evolution that allows us to believe in the importance of the mind and the emotions at once? Probably ! But we do not shall limit ourselves within the mystical experience of Al- Said or that of Jamil Hammoudi who in

his quest for self , fell into the trap of the contradiction between Western materialism and Eastern spirituality . This would have distorted many experiments of Arab calligraphers who only the aesthetic counted for them. For these latters, the letter was , indeed , the essential element of an abstract plastic vision , responding to the temptation to imitate the other , as claimed by Kamal Balata and others, even if some artists have opposed him in relation to the aesthetics of memory and heritage aiming to reconcile traditions and modernity .

The previous questions are not beyond the scope where the eye acts and the mind thinks, measures and codifies. But the action of the eye and the mind work suffer from a deficit that only the emotional power of man can identify and treat, which brings us to the last part of our study, which is: the horizons of the artistic experience. In fact, the eye of Al Said leads him to a particular horizon, where he touches both an intellectual background and a real possibility of unveiling. It is the same for Madiha Omar who gave free rein to her imagination in the Arabic calligraphic forms discovered by chance. Finally, it is in this sense that we can speak of an artistic consistency, from the Levant to the Arab Maghreb, constructed around the need for the Arabic letter as a tool, a method and visual experience providing a specific identity, that is claimed by some and rejected by others.

It is undeniable that calligraphy has led to noteworthy results, justifying an authentic artistic action and a relative Arabic purity. One cannot deny it if we think less in individual and collective styles than the rhythm of the artistic work itself, in relation to the sincerity of the artist and his ability to implement his own vision, and if we put aside the mysticism and secularism issues. At the very heart of such attitude, we find the experiences Shakir Hassan Al Said, the Tunisian Nja Mahdaoui and the Moroccan Mohamed Chaba . However, some critics tend to separate the tributaries of the source, in favor of a methodology that retains only the plastic aesthetic. However, other critics bind faith and religious sensitivity to the nature of the produced work, that is, from our point of view, a philosophical and psychological truth that we have already mentioned in the analysis of the spirit and the letter of the aesthetic.

Now another question arises: to whom therefore returns the role of pioneer? Sherbel Dagher had already arisen in studying the history of Arabic calligraphy. He discovered that there were several pioneers, each with his own way. Indeed, the beginning of the Arabic calligraphy has not consisted in the imitation of a first Arabic builder by a group of disciples and successors. For example, Jamil Hammoudi was not influenced by Madiha Omar and Ouaki Allah has not imitated Shakir Hassan Al Said.

Dagher specifies in great detail in his book entiteled: Al'houroufiâ al'arabiâ , fann wa houwyâ (the Arabic calligraphy , art and identity) that the Arabic calligraphic phenomenon was recurring here and there at the same time . The Iraqis Jamil Hamoudi

and Madiha Omar , the Lebanese Said Al-Aql , Wajih Nahle and Salwa Radhwi Chokir and the Sudanese Othman Ouaki-Allah , Ahmed Chibrine and Ibrahim Solhi , all proved their pioneering role , thanks to a specific calligraphic work . Then, cities like Washington, Paris and others still at the top of all novelties, welcomed the calligraphic adventures of a young generation, temporally almost concurrent with each other and with respect to the birth of the western calligraphy.

But while recognizing the generality of the phenomenon and the lack of calligraphic pioneers in the strict sense of the term, Sherbel Dagher tends to believe that Madiha Omar would the first in this experiment, indicating the date of 1946. It is evidenced that the testimony of this artist [(21)], including the story of his consultation of the Arab-Islamic art professor Richard Hawzen to whom she had submitted some of her first calligraphic works where she probed the aesthetic possibilities of the letter . What holds us back , in the opinion of this professor, is that he admits he did not know of the existence of calligraphic experiences that are previous to those of Madiha Omar . Such confession gives less weight to his reply to the artist: *Continue in this direction. It is your idea , nobody has preceded you.*[(22)] . If we believe him, Madiha Omar would be considered the pioneer of the Arabic calligraphy , but we doubt that his eye ignored the western art movement of that time.

In the light of these historical data, the genesis of Arabic calligraphy dates back to the precise 1946 date and the experience of Madiha Omar. This date and this relationship are stated in several Arabic unreliable documents and references, which make the issue even more confusing. In all cases, we cannot ignore the relationship with the western calligraphy, as it is presented (meaning, form, and media). In his book entitled: Attayarat al'fannya al'mouâssirâ (contemporary calligraphic movements), Mahmoud Amhaz confirmed its existence before the time of Madiha Omar. He refers to them to the manifesto group of calligraphers during the exhibition of 1946, at a time when the frequency of the calligraphic events provided for this movement recognition such as the Paris Biennale of 1965, he finally devoted to it a separate booth.

The question «Who is the pioneer?» Is not very important compared to the work itself, to its aesthetic value, the sincerity of the artist with himself? There is an issue that deserves our attention and which cannot in any case be derogatory for the Arab artists. It concerns the hidden motives of this movement and, obviously, the sensitivity of the eye and the mind. Did all these pioneers who are geographically dispersed, intellectually different, but united in the calligraphic movement, obey more to the eye or mind? Otherwise, is their artistic unanimity due to the new aesthetic language of the west and its attractiveness, or even the need for an art and Arab identities suddenly inspired by the specific need of the other?

Now let's turn to the evocation of the theories of some Arab calligraphers, whether individuals or groups. Here we seek answers without claiming to find them even in the background of the works as stated by Shakir Hassan Al Said:

For us, who draw our inspiration from the Arabic letter , our position is to understand the identity of the current Arabic heritage that we want to crystallize in the use of its most important intellectual and cultural component, which is the letter . So we will play this role of laying the cornerstone of a contemporary school of art inspired by the letter. [22]

If we consider the aesthetics of the "unique dimension" through the eyes of Al-Said, we will see that his purpose is to draw the letter as a fulcrum, to access its meaning as a pure plastic value (which is largely inspired by the abstract art), to the essence of Islam and the nature of the entirety of its arts, particularly, the script. Here, a suspension of judgment is required to critically reflect the scope of the project in real time and place , now that calligraphy and the artist have mastered the art of the letter, that they gave masterpieces work , that the taste , therefore diversified , that the experiences accumulated . These are merely preliminary until a more appropriate analysis.

The Arabic alphabet consists of straight lines and curved ones, according to the point Sherbel Dagher who asks: "are there not in these two units the very foundations of the Arabic script to the geometric , circular or curved angles of the decorative arts (circle and square) and of the Arabic architecture (bows and arrows)?[24]

Moreover, as stated by Balan Idri , taking up the case of the long calligraphic history, what characterizes the aesthetic of Arabic letter, here and now, is this hesitation between the desire for calligraphic renewal, its abstract transformation where we imitate the west, and the resumption of ancient forms with variations on , for example, the styles called " Kufic ", " thuluth " and sometimes " Persian ". Idri notes in this regard that:

In Kufa , we retained the " Kufic " style and it was surrounded by so much care that it was called by eponym . But this practice also became the first of center of calligraphic interest in each Islamic country. In Iran , it gave wonderful Persian types, incomparable ; Turkey, it gave the beautiful forms of the " diwani " and the " taghrayate "; in Morocco, we did derive exceptionally inventive styles , in India, the" Kufic " took a pretty Indian color , and in China it was enriched and embellished with the very specific local ways. Added to all these varieties of extraordinary creations due to the Umayyads, the Abbasids, the Sassanids , the Fatimids , the Mongols , the Mamelukes , the Seljuks , ... what has led to an unparalleled creative explosion and what has made the " Kufic " a perfect art between the 10th and 13th centuries.[22]

The "Kufic" does not refer only to all this geographical space, it evokes more the

aesthetic sensibility breaking through the time. Consequently, we need a historian and comparative look like Sherbel Dagher suggests, based on the organic unity that brings together script, architecture and on the links of the script with the arrow and the arc. Script emerged there as the authentic result of its environment.

We can no longer ignore the question raised above about the unequal aesthetic situations between the East and the West and the vanguard role of the second. This geographical and temporal difference has enabled a calligraphic enrichment of our heritage, but this richness will only succeed if it, in its aesthetic ambitions , relies on an audacious mentality, allowing the Arab artist to artistically represent his being and personality , here and now.

We cannot easily remember the past history with all its cultural, geographical and other data. This is probably what prompted the Lebanese Said Aql to abandon the calligraphy inspired by the European abstract art, because the potential of the letter cannot give it more than calligraphy gave to the Europeans. He explains that his efforts in this area are to defend and illustrate this aesthetic richness, but our efforts have a lower contribution than those of Arab artists and former Muslims, who explored it in its own linguistic, decorative, social and spiritual environment.[23]

We will perhaps end up then with a harsh judgment. The eye of the Arab artist seems to always need a guide, as if the long and the profound decline of his civilization had deprived him of the ability to take initiative and to have his own vision. Indeed, what we mean by vision is not limited to the simple look, but consists of a thorough look by the spirit, embodied in art and taking otherness into account.

The existence of the other in this area was an early discovery in the path of Said Aql. He was followed in this way by others and their common calligraphic experience knew quite an early completion. This is the case of Shakir Hassan Al Said, Youssef Ahmed and Ali Hassan. However, paradoxically, we discover that the letter has unknown possibilities, imaginary, unexplored shadows. Therefore, calligraphic experience is extended through the language and the vision of Nja Mahdaoui, Dhia Azzawi , Ben Bella , Hassan Masoudi , Mohamed Miliji, Yussuf Sida, Kamal Balata, Sami Borhen, Hamed Abdallah, Rafa Nasri, Ahmed Mustapha, Salah Tahar and others. But its starting point, its purpose and its open experimental course combine the identity memory and the western orientation of the abstract art. It seems that the presence of the model of the other at the heart of the Arabic work is fatal.

Calligraphy has finally ended up in the realism and its scope has gradually narrowed. This new reality leads us to another question about the identity of its artistic achievements in the world, beyond the first decades of its history.

IV

In 1946, Apple Johns suggested an ideal diagnosis of the current condition hammering home: *We live in the era of the image!* Roland Barthes, French thinker of modernity, followed him, much later, giving a complete picture of this condition: This is the civilization of the image !

In both cases, the density and the diversity of data emphasize the hegemony of the media and the information technology, whose encounter generates an incredible and unlimited abundance, of a total nuisance, a kind of *the empire of the contemplative look*, in the words of Foucault, or even a universe of imitative images, images imitating images and self- imitating, according to Baudrillard.(25)

Such a brief description of the current life will be the main idea of the end of the study. By referring to the strength of the eye and the mind in their relationship with art, we cannot forget the charm of the new image. It is intrusive, excessive and its philosophy consists now in neutralizing the social and the cultural identities to which it substitutes the power of generalization, for two decades. We even witness the breakup of the body that is controlled and integrated into the show, which gives the eye a different sensibility and to the spirit a structure that leaves no space for what is stable.

The body no longer belongs neither to the West nor to the East; the law of synthesis now applies to all. It's like an approach to the world paradoxically subject to a unique, mediatised and technological eye. In addition to the political nature of this phenomenon exploited by the great powers, globalization which is initially of economic essence is not without social, political, religious, and consequently artistic and cultural assimilation.

This involves two parallel orientations, one of which concerns the mind of the cultural and historical identity, while the other consists of the oscillating integration between the two poles. The identity issue becomes here ideological and political to the point that the arts themselves are now part of the rhythms and paths all mapped. It is impossible to escape the integration and the voluntary submission to these spaces that bring the forms, knowledge, cultures, values, identities and arts to a unique thought that is subject to anyone, being not made to enlighten the other.

What embodies this process is that the lights of the museums are only shed on the creators who meet the requirements of a star system similar to the system in the industry of Hollywood stars. This industry is closely linked with international exhibition galleries, formal or informal, as well as with areas of arts marketing. These latter are excessively politicized, the artistic work there becomes a serial object in the service of the market laws, of a legitimization and an increased adulation of money.

To that, one must add the criticism thoroughly domesticated to produce the stars of

the future and the practices that control the granting of art prizes, dictate the courses and decide conditions and criteria. All this requires a single pass, to the detriment of the theses that argue for the need of particular identities.

We should ask ourselves if we contributed in all this abundance, if we have a role on the art scene in general, whether it is suitable for our identity to adopt the new thinking of the image. Since only a few years, some believed the death of the image. This was the result of a new conviction according to which the author of the image is dead, in favor of the art of the image itself. The predominance of media and the postmodern means of expression become obvious from the eye and the mind of the spectator.

In fact, the idea of the death of the image is only a pure face as long as there are creators. As for the idea of the death of these latter, it rather indicates the narrowing of their influence and the neutralizing of their individual existence. The image embodies now this thinking in a society where the exchange relations devote what philosophers of modernity call the surveillance, spectacle and ephemeral society. The identity itself is no longer stable. If calligraphy is defined as a rethinking of the being and the other, in the Arab- Islamic arts, as in arts in general, it then appears as an awakening of consciousness as a plastic quest that belongs to the Arabic artistic historicity, and carried by natural, founding experiments.[26]

We will ask again if calligraphy can survive in the era of the image civilization. Undeniably, the issue does not lack interest. In fact, the history of the artistic style is dependent on its practice and its transformation into works. If none usurp it to its original creator, history appears distorted, anachronistic.

The current struggle of many calligraphers is a symbolic gesture. A rather realistic vision reminds us about reality. Calligraphy continues to give way, which requires audacity to confront the dictatorship of the new image, even if this audacity is limited to the mere perpetuation of the calligraphic practice. But this will at the same time require a more sensitive eye and a mind more capable of negotiating with the brutal nature of this image . Here undoubtedly lies the whole problem that awaits solution . As we read in the argument of the conference, there will be less wise to stand permanently rigid in front of a foreign heritage to our thinking and our current emotion than to resurrect it in its authentic spirit . It will be no longer smart look towards the north , to prioritize and be enchanted by its model as if there were no others , or even to go beyond it in scattered directions .

One last question remains. Is the quest for identity really behind our desire to stack the cards , accentuate the past and look into the future ? There are so many similarities in the field of creation, between the East and the West, which legitimize this question and prove the impossibility of founding a special and absolutely unique project. That is why we asked the question of the necessary fidelity to our authentic heritage, namely , the

Arab-Islamic calligraphy, and to the personal contribution as an efficient act to construct the identity rather than freezing it .

This is exactly the goal that we must not lose sight of in our arts, apart from the role of calligraphy in the arts of the world. If our debate on calligraphy bears a future look, this future would belong to those who will practice it as a personal choice and combat.

Notes:

(1) G. Hue Self Herman, *Nassiât , bayn al'herminoutikâ wa attafkikiâ* , translated by Hassan Nazim and Ali Hakim Salah, Al'markaz athakâfi al'arabî , Casablanca , Beirut, 2002, p. 238-242 . We may also consult Merleau -Ponty " Al'marî wa al'lâmarî " translation of Souâd Mohamed Khether , revision of Father Nicholas Dagher , Dar achououn athakafiâ al'âmma .

(2) Jacques Fontanier *Simiâ al'marî* , translation of Ali Assad, Dar al- Hiwar , Syria, 2003 , p.17.

(3) G . Hue Sel Harman , op. cit. p . 24 . Merleau -Ponty states that the complementarity between who feels and the sensation is based on the fact that the body is the place and the instrument of perception. This means that it is the body that perceives things. So I look at the world by making myself part of it. The transformation of nature is linked to my body. Thanks to this circularity, the artist can know things. His purpose remains affixed to the painting of these things themselves and not on their surface. The work of the eye focuses then on the link which also depends on the language we use and in which we create our life. (See Hue Salt Hermann) .

(4) Shakir Abdelhamid , *Assr Assoura , assalbiât wa al'ijabiât* Series , *Kitab alam al'mârifâ , Al'majliss al'watanî li'athakâfâ wa al'founoun wa al'adâb* , Kuwait, No. 311 , January 2005 , p . 104 .

(5) Sherbel Dagher , " *Al'hayiz atachkîlî fi al fann al'arabî al'islâmi* " magazine *Al'wihdâ , Al'majliss al'kawmi li athakâfâ al'arabyâ* , 6th year, No. 70-71 , July-August , 1990, p. 34 .

(6) Sherbel Dagher , op. cit. , p. 33-34 .

(7) Mohamed Abed al- Jabri , " Azmat thakâfa am azmat aql " *Foussoul* , Journal of the literary criticism , Cairo , vol. IV , No. 3 , April-March 1984 . P. 108.

(8) Etienne Souriau, *Al'jamaliâ abra al'oussour* , translated by Michel Assi, manchourât Ouaydât , Paris , Lebanon, 2nd Edition, 1986 , p. 10-11 .

(9) Marie Thérèse Abdel Nassih , *Atamthîl athakafi bayn al'marî wa al'maktoub* , Al'majlss al'âala li athakafa , Cairo, 2001, p. 16 .

(10) Marie -Thérèse Abdel Nassih , op. cit. , p. 16 .

(11) Marie -Thérèse Abdel Nassih , op. cit. , p. 39 .

(12) Marie -Thérèse Abdel Nassih , op. cit. , P . 27 .

(13) Moulim Laroussi " Min'arrassm ilâ falsafat al'fann " Journal *Al'wihdâ*

, Al'majliss al'kawmi li athakâfâ al'arabyâ , Morocco , No. 70-71 , July / August 1990, p. 18 .

(14) Mahmoud Ahmaz , *Attayarât al'fannia al'mouâssirâ* , Charikat al'matbouât li atawzî wa annachr , Beirut, 1996.15 Mahmoud Ahmaz , op.cit. , P. 216-217.

(16) Sherbel Dagher , *Al'hourouﬁâ al'arabyâ , fann wa houwiyâ*Charikat al'matbouât li atawzî wa annachr , Beirut, 1990, p. 75 .

(17) Sherbel Dagher , op. cit. , p. 76 .

(18) Sherbel Dagher , op. cit. , p. 20 .

(19) Sherbel Dagher , op. cit. , P.P. 28-29 .

(20) Sherbel Dagher , op. cit. , p. 24 .

(21) Sherbel Dagher , op. cit. , p. 26 .

(22) Mahmoud Ahmaz , op. cit. , 281.

(23) Sherbel Dagher, op.cit. , P. 143 .

(24) Sherbel Dagher , « Al'fannân attassouîrî , blusher Mahadoui « Journal *Fikr wa Fann* , Internationiz , No. 41, 1985.

* Here we must acknowledge the experience of the Egyptian Salah Tahar. It lasted many years and was limited to the work in the name of God, Allah (over than 500 canvases). This number expresses a form of mysticism comparable to the one of Shakir Hassan Al Said, but this limitation to a single calligraphic motif may surprise and undermine his experience.

(25) Balan Idri , *Al'harf Al Arabi ﬁ al'fann attachkili* , Al'majliss al'kawmi li athakâfâ al'arabyâ , Morocco , No 70-71 , August 1990, p. 25 .

(26) Shakir Abdelhamid , op. cit.

Levels of exploitation of some Arabic heritage in contemporary Arabic experiences.

Case studies: Samir Triki and Lotfi Arnaout

Prof. Fateh Ben Amer

The two Tunisian artists, Samir Triki and Lotfi Arnaout, are among the few artists to have constantly exploited the aesthetic data of the Arab-Islamic arts. They have different methods and fundamentally divergent approaches, though they give the impression that they kept the same treatment to these general or local data. Samir Triki treated all the square, hexagonal or octagonal shapes, while Lotfi Arnaout has not ceased to use the figure of the star polygon, widely used in the Arab- Islamic decorative arts. Our contribution to the critique of the Arab arts will be here to try to address the methods of both artists to distinguish their approaches and creativity.

I / Lotfi Arnaout

The presence of Lotfi Arnaout on the pictorial scene preceded that of Samir Triki . He opted for the use of the figure of the conventional star, from the Arab-Islamic decorative heritage since his solo exhibition , held in Tunis in 1976, in the Information Room . He adopts there the spraying with the compressed air technique.

His experience has been quite unique and we will see how he invented a whole plastic history of this stellar figure, and how he loaded it with various lights , making his paintings a closed universe on itself while illuminating the outside . Such inventions gave his art a special stamp that is familiar to us , but which distance us by its amazing power . Astonishment leaves us only at the moment when we imagine a past which is today differently processed but still independent and symbolic at the same time.

1- strategy iterative search

For Lotfi Arnaout , the decorative figure of the star was a kind of opening on the plastic scene fascinated by the exploitation and the interpretation of the heritage . Thus,

he initiated a course marked by perseverance, conviction and personal desire to create unique works, authentic and rooted in his culture and civilization. This decorative unit that is the figure of the star is only a metaphor of space and architectural entries. It is even probably the most significant element of its long continuous lines, its permanent architecture and its relationship with the Arab-Islamic civilization.

This figure both derivative and composite became a fundamental unity of the works of Arnaout since the 1970s and 1980s until the present day , as evidenced by his works and as stated by Samir Triki :

For many years, Lotfi Arnaout reworks the same geometric figure, borrowed from the Arab-Islamic decorative background , namely the form of two squares that overlap at an angle of 45 °, which gives a kind of an octagonal wreath . We can explain this fascination with the referential dimension of this form rooted in the Arab-Islamic civilization as well as by the numbers which control its composition, especially with the 4-corner- square.[(1)]

The canvas No. 1, entitled “Tamawoj” (Crimpiness) shows how the painter has arranged his work and color effects using the method of pulsed repetition in the Arab-Islamic decorative system. The result is a kind of latticework or a magic decorative garment. The unit is not repeated there mechanically, but it returns with the same measures in a variety of plastic values , such as the color and the horizontal or vertical movement. Furthermore, the artist chose the shape of the square, divided into 16 similar subunits, where he placed the decorative motif of the octagonal star plateau, playing together on similarity and diversity. This method also made possible formal rhythms, linear and chromatic to the multiple optical effects, like accumulation and transparency. The artist also implements a technique and a notional and conceptual knowledge of ambivalent inspiration: Arab-Islamic and Euro-Western.

In the general shape of the canvas, the square is a founding structure. It includes four horizontal and vertical sets. The overlapping of the two squares product an octagon which generates the starry wreath and structures a set of 16 subunits, that is to say, 2x8 or 4x4. In this way, the work is presented as a virtually infinite synthesis, whose decorative spatial continuity is conceivable, according to a recurring sequence in the scope, places and time, which is precisely the characteristic of the Arab- Islamic decorative arts.[(2)]

The artist introduces some variations in these units to furnish plastic space and distributes light from the unit homes in a style that changes in intensity, energy, color, progression, degree and contrast, passing from one unit to another. So he strives to break the monotony and create aesthetic event to counter any effect of congealing and spend in the work part of its energy and its desire creator.

For example, the position of the green and empty square in the wreath emphasizes the desire to isolate what is naturally linked, because the artist has limited the lower right

square to four units, compared with the uniting square that is the output of sixteen squares and which contains the first as recurrent first part. Lotfi Arnaout has taken advantage from the use of this paint tool which is the airbrush for the treatment of the plastic components, especially for the implementation of the accumulated effects, color grading and light distribution. The latter is rigorously studied and carefully managed, through the control of quantities and the density of the colors successively spread. This is what makes to think to superposed veils and to the distribution of a soft low and so poetic light, which contributes to the communication between the units of the whole.

This choice of the decorative, iterative figure is that the square is always inseparable; canvas is built incessantly, sometimes on a chromatic synthesis, sometimes on a contrast. The brightness of the color is greater and gives more relief to the opposite square , the overall unit is then more visible, the possibilities of reading and contemplation are released through both of the digital and structural game. The empty squares assert themselves in some places to halt the gaze and incite reading. This is remarkably clear in the first and second paintings. We add to that an interpretation of the light which is the basis of the forms' function benefiting from the outcomes in the Arab-Islamic architecture, knowing well that the operation of the light has also a religious founding connotation which must be considered before any realistic or geographical vision.

The third canvas confirms this light treatment. Arnaout transformed all the units iterative to enlightened and enlightening bastions, within the same square structure with the same dimensions and the same decorative unit, which has given to the physical presence of the painting which will have a sky-lit with stars and moons, that the dark blue gave grater plausibility.

This work on the light and on the repeating unit remains directly turned to the use of certain aspects of heritage, especially the traditional crafts. As this starry structure focuses on the importance of the separation between two spaces (interior and exterior), the control of the light coming from the outside and the fading effect of the visibility of the interior for the external look. The third canvas brings to light all the attention that the painter gives to transform clarity into light emerging from the network that represents the overall decorative figure. With small irregularities punctuating the overall balance, this network appears as a united space which gathers points of light.(4)

In addition, although the artist focuses on a pace where the dark blue and the light blue are recurrent, the overall space of the canvas (here as in the paintings mentioned above), is unified by this iterative rhythm, and the gradation of light in each dominant color. This reflects the of particular availability of the sensitive creator to the scope and the openness, an availability which is perfectly in line with the distribution of this light that gives the picture space more openness and offers the look more attractive points.

We also see in these pictures how, with the same color, the artist manages to unify the pictorial space and repeat the same decorative unity. It is a basic requirement of the work, giving more access to the absolute. The meaningful value is confined to forms, which are included in all directions, as axes of symmetry.

In other works, Lotfi Arnaout focuses his attention on the rhythm inspired not only from the Arab-Islamic civilization, but also from Western models of abstract art such as the pioneers Mondrian and Vasarely . It is clearly seen in many of his earlier paintings where he became interested in optical effects obtained by treating each unit decorative apart, unrelated to the neighboring unit.

This singular quest of Lotfi Arnaout continues with a constant return to the common digital root which is the number 4 and to the other numbers derived from its multiplication: 8, 16 and 36. The artist chooses unfailingly to empty a median square of any decorative alibi, to transform it into a dark and unified space around which evolves a multiplicative pace, and where each unit takes the median square and stands out from it by a precise light value.

2 - At the intersection of meaning and reference

Depending on the works discussed here, we think that the artistic career of Lotfi Arnaout goes through two steps articulated by the 80s. The transition from the first to the second ensures a continuity whose essential feature is the commitment to writing as a structural element of the work. This constancy of writing is based on various styles and a spirit of renewal, whose starting point is a strong lyrical and poetic spirit of dionysian obedience, the end point is rather rigorous apollonian tendency. Without them, the work has no longer any consistency or even no foundation.

The first works embodied an abstract artistic creativity, while the latter crystallize an experience whose primary concern is to perform every time a mentally, geometrically and mathematically structured canvas, to the point of breaking with the creator's bodies itself. (The previous highlighted the presence of the painter by the scriptural expressiveness of his brush).

This makes us think of the process of the compressed air applied by Arnaout and which involves technically the removal of the hand and the tool in relation with the canvas, as the completion of the work progresses. In addition, the painting, according to this method, is gradually turning into a mental, mental and numeral game, taking into account that the operations the painter performed on the surface of the canvas. In earlier works, writing is a plastic data, intended to assert itself, whereas in the last works, it is a structural data present before and at the beginning of pictorial creation itself, where it

eventually retreats. This is the geometric basis of the relations which allows to plan the operations, determines the distribution of spaces in units and the communication between them, as if it was a network that can extend in all directions (horizontal, vertical, right, left).

Lotfi Arnaout began his artistic experience with a quest where the work could satisfy his glowing passion for an authentic creation, linked to the creator, in a visceral and priority way. So he took his distances from the dominant practices, to savor this taste of the matrix communication with his peers, but he eventually retains only ended in his practice what presides over the relationship with one's self, and without any compromise(7) He therefore largely drew his inspiration from the abstract art, after frequenting Néjib Belkhodja, and after studies and research at the National School of Fine Arts in Paris, between 1968 and 1975. He has mastered the stages of its evolution and art was no longer for him the expression of a mental activity and mathematical research.

And as the Arab-Islamic decorative art is founded upon principles that overlap his new convictions, he reserved a special place in the space of his modern and contemporary work, to the decorative unity that is the star borrowed from the heritage. We notice in this radical change some fundamental choices, the persistence of the effects of the first step, especially the prevalence of the structural inclination and the binarity junction / disjunction, between the plastic components. However, there is a change in performance and in the use of technical tools, starting with the body which moves away from the canvas as the work progresses.

Regarding the exploitation of Arab-Islamic decorative arts, the practice of Lotfi Arnaout has been distinguished at two levels and by two approaches. At the first level, appears the construction of the decorative shape as structure and a scriptural drawing, permeable to both iteration and empowerment. For the second level, he ensures the independence of the work by adopting the aspect of the modern painting, which is the framed and autonomous canvas.

In terms of approaches, the first consists of using the compositional data and the traditional synthetic methods of the decorative art like the patch, symmetry, centralization, radiation, rhythm. It is clearly seen in the use of the "variation on a theme", that is to say the constantly modified recurrence of the square's figure, available in similar and iterative units, in all its "stellar" canvases, where we see the same frame and the same shape. They are precisely the fundamental principles of Arab-Islamic decorative arts.

Thus, a firm belief has pushed Arnaout to have faith in this decorative shape for its great expressive power, the simplicity of its origin and its components, as well as its complex possibilities. The figure of the star is indeed between the square and the circle, which, both of them, carry and religious and cultural connotations and symbols. Arnaout

is pretty close to Mondrian who believed in the expressiveness of forms, in their power and their capacity to go beyond the possible, thanks to the abstraction. (10) The influence of this pioneer on our designer has probably determined the evolution of his vision and his method.As Abderrazak Khéchine writes:

The works and research of Mondrian attempted to rehabilitate the optical dimension of the pictorial work, in accordance with standards of balance, not only in terms of the plastic activity, but also with humans and society. The aim is to establish an equation between nature and mind, the individual and the universal, the feminine and the masculine, which constitutes the general basis of the new art.(11)

3-Between the part and the whole

How can the eye look at a canvas of Lotfi Arnaout? Where should it start? These questions are related to the same shape as an independent canvas, as a being in itself and as a plastic product. According to Bergson:

The framework defines something in the painting, excluding of the others who have the same aspect and the same dimensions. But, after adapting the shape, the painting adheres to the frame. It is the same for the brain and the consciousness.(12)

The paintings of Arnaout have multiple frames contained in each other. There is the usual frame, there are boundaries surrounding the units, and there are also other technical aspects that suggest the idea of limit. The eye only leaves a framework for entering another which holds it, as the chosen form retains a certain aspect, a coloring and a special and well-studied lighting.

The artist wishes to enclose his subject between margins, a kind of framing patch which separates the pictorial content of the rest of the world, and he encloses the units in frames that set them apart from the set. The canvas has thus no support than itself, in its reference to the Arab-Islamic decorative arts and to the modern art of Western inspiration. However, the contribution of the painter is quite diverse, since he draws in the heritage as in his personal, technique, referential and mental creativity to the point that the star shape seems to add an"arnaoutian" identity story to his story written in the various fields of the Arab-Islamic decorative arts.

This choice of the transformation and the personal contribution is a dynamic principle which goes beyond the interaction between the parties to reach a thought of eternity. Lotfi Arnaout achieved it through the iterative style (14), which does not mean the repetition of the same product (parts and all), but the variation of content in the repetition of the same mold. It is the dissimilarity in the likeness, where the effect is achieved mainly by the differentiation of units and paintings in terms of the composition, the order

and the arrangement of elements, though the artist insists on equivalence of points, from one unit to another, and on the creation of an event that fixes the look of the viewer.

Moreover, the attraction is a power that dwells in the canvasses of Arnaout, thanks to the explosive light which fuses units, the rotary movement given to the look, whenever it is focused on a point of the star, or on an entire painting. Each unit synthesizes the principle of the concentration that of color power, and those of the lights of those of the lines. This is what makes these paintings units and varieties from where everything starts and to which everything returns. They are related to the absolute while adhering to the universe of simple things, belonging to a dynamic geometry which reanimates through recurrence. Thus, we see better how the tension governs the relations between the components and the part constituted by a decorative unit, similar to a motif in a woven work, and how the canvas becomes a comprehensive framework for all the units. However, the canvas itself represents a part of a larger whole which is its reference, because originally it was a framed part of an agreed decorative cover.

The "differential recurrence" is nothing but a commitment to a work principle similar to the accession to life where days and nights succeed and life events are repeated, happy and unhappy, amazing and ordinary. We can better understand and interpret this creative iteration in the mold of the similar / dissimilar, or of the inventive repetition. The total mismatch of units refers to the mosaic of life in its totality, which is the opposite of stiffening, or even death

4-Light-dark

It was rarely seen in other painters as much of transparency and brightness than those that characterize the works of Lotfi Arnaout, especially in those where the blue and the white dominate at the same time. The blue color evolves there gradually from the clarity to the darker and darker& tones. For the white, it remains these extremely illuminating values, whose tones vary and adapt to the ambient atmosphere. It is not surprising that the colors of Lotfi Arnaout change between the 1970s and the 1980s, from hot values (first paintings) to the colder values (subsequent painting to the 1980s), where the blue opens a space which would be quite united if there was not the effect of light fusing white, either the entire canvas, or points of units.

This predominance of blue and this fusion of white lead to a distribution of less pale radiances, thanks to the impact of the hot values such as yellow, orange and purple. The painting enlightenment is more lively. On the other hand, the use of the compressed air technique has helped to create a light spray that usually conceals the work plan that is originally shown deliberately to accentuate the joints of units. So, we see in the gradual illumination how the spray creates dense points in the units and dilutes in the colored

spaces, as the painter's hand moves away from it to the outside. Spatial dimensions are then formed and gradually harmonized between them and with the successive colors to slowly accumulate at the end of light, chromatic, soft and transparent layers (which is due to the light pulverized mixture using the airbrush). This creates a kind of game where, on one side, the light reflected in lines, the colors and the gradation go beyond and meet up, and the dark on the other side, but in a general transparency of poetic appearance.

Arnaout strives to highlight it by continuing to use a varied blue over the entire surface of the canvas, the white and the yellow on the edges and in particular in the centers of units. The used chromatic material is light, soft and permeable to the gradual light. This reflects less the painter's hand than the movement of thought parallel to the execution built in stages and by planning. The remoteness of the creator's body in relation to the canvas is a founding operation that identifies the thinking and the creative gesture. The conveyance of the creative work is seen in the concealment of traces of the creative body, reduced to a force that transforms the material and gives it a powerful presence. It is as if the body of Lotfi Arnaout was hiding behind the airbrush and confessed to have just the light at hand. it is Hallaj claiming that only God is in (his) cloak.

II- Samir Triki : Dialogue with heritage

Lotfi Arnaout was already quite advanced in his experience of the figure of the star when the abstract works of Samir Triki have appeared on the art scene. They are more marked by the use of the borrowed material from heritage like those of Fakhfakh , for example. Triki openly claims this trend, especially when he asserts the influence of his Arab- Islamic art studies on his choices. He told Assaad Orabi :

Without the discovery of the Islamic art and its mathematical rhythm during my years of field research, I would have continued my break with painting.[16]

Samir Triki very clearly specifies, here as elsewhere, how important it is for the artist to base his theoretical research on a matter of heritage. His experience lies in this context then. His interest focuses on the heritage that goes back to pre-Islamic epochs. The decorative and geometric architectural elements here are a model and a vein in which the painter draws, at the same time when he finds his pleasure and research topics in mathematical exercises. It is a process that relies on the analysis of methods for generating forms for the distribution, composition and collection on the surface of the canvas. Triki has no objection to take advantage of mathematics and geometry. They do not impede his creator's creativity that remains physically and mentally present in the pictorial space thanks to his memory and his organizing faculty of figurative and spatial data, taken from the experience. [17]

About the treatment that he reserves for the used material, he states:

I firstly explain my choices of a particular pattern by the satisfaction it brings me. Because I do not like to be redundant and I hold patterns I consider being modern. A pattern is the smallest element that can be recurrent, and can be a simple geometric figure, as it can be composed.(18)

Such a statement apparently simplifies the relationship between the painter and the geometric figures that predominate in his pictorial space in the form of networks and units at once. But the observation of the multiple works of Triki reveals the predominance of the reticular form in the pictorial space, whether square or rectangular. It is always the starting point in the structure of the painting, especially in the early works. The eye captures there the presence of an exceptional fragment of an encompassing, more extended area, as if the framed painting wanted then to focus the viewer's look on this fragment.

As for the vehicular forms, they differ from one painting to another depending on the concentration on a particular place of the pictorial space. Despite his statements favoring the unitary structure, we note that he also opts for the lattice structure. So he alternates the two in a double movement: from the part to the whole and vice versa. The exploration of the paintings 5 and 6 will prove this.

The reticular figure is based on the well studied overlap according to the rotation and displacement of the predetermined angles and the exploited forms in the color and tactile distribution, accurate and selective at a time. This figure of the network is not limited to this role, but it facilitates the framing and the cutting. The study of the linear structure reveals the possibility to extend it outside the frame itself of the painting. Indeed, in the paintings 7 and 8, the frame identifies a space that the artist designed for aesthetic purposes, as confirmed by the chosen color, which is independent on the plastic and cosmetic data which are the accumulation and composition.

All these processes are confirmed by the change of the lattice arrangements producing units such as the square, the hexagon, the triangle, and other shapes, thus departing from the known molds and multiplying the plastic visibility as possible. The paintings 7 and 8 show then the logic of the variation of shapes and canvases, that each of them generates its own structures. But the most crucial matter is that they are not confined to the requirements of the decorative arts and their various references, but to the selective determination of the painter, his generative standards, his desire to change his choices, his the aesthetic imaginary, but without losing completely their referential dimension.

The framing of the paintings is one of the crucial operations of the pictorial design of Samir Triki . Articulating the plastic space and the absolute space , the frame also delimits the overall unit (the canvas) with respect to its units and vice versa. The paintings therefore appear as structures

... Autonomous within a frame, but using widely the technique of the decorative arts and arabesques, without the domination of this technique in it or its hindrance to the main objective. [(10)]

This makes us deduce that the painter, mindful of this issue, designed his paintings in a sensitivity more related to the arabesques, without making this inclination a purpose of the artistic research. In this parallelism between a style inspired by the architectural and the decorative arts and the daily uses from one side, and the influence of this inspiration on the canvas, Samir Triki conceives a problematic that employs the foundations of the generative game, unique to the arabesque and the decorative arts. He involves there three operations: the lattice structure, the intersection of lines and orientations and the sprawl, or what Graber calls *prose*.

Samir Triki also suggests a plastic design informed by his mathematical skills, applied to the generative, logic approach: measurement, displacement, rotation and accumulation at a time. He admits this approach and favors for its cognitive dimension combining intuition and science, learning and discovery. He recognizes the professional artist's merit, inventiveness and knowing and he does not transform art into activity of specialists. Even if he is not passionate about mathematics, he demonstrated then an infallible curiosity and availability to understand the lattice and unitary structures of the ancient art, taking advantage of several technical methods for treating the decorative material, which is available in the Mediterranean architecture. [(20)] He found there a true inspiration to produce constantly renewed works, with tensions of personal or collective and cultural order, where the meaning and the symbolism affirm and justify the belonging of the creator. [(21)]

Figures and compositional elements reflect the thinking of the artist and show us his method. As Faucillon says: *Behind the system of forms, there is the system of the brain, or rather of the mind.* [(22)] This goes well in line with the credo of Samir Triki, whose aesthetic convictions are developed step by step , to advance his experience in terms of ideas and practice. He rejected all the foreign data to focus all his attention on the study of the aesthetic heritage, not without examining the method of the Syrian researcher Afif Bahnassi, to whom he dedicated a study. Thus, he does seek his career in the treatment of form and style within various heritage items, but according to a generative approach that balances the form and the background with a modern and contemporary design, and using new tools.

2- Procedural measures and dialectical reference

Let us note from the outset the importance of many conceptual and practical elements in the work of Triki , namely the framing of canvases , the generative technique,

the movement , the rotation, the distribution, the balance that does not break with the symmetry, but it integrates it into the overall composition and, finally, the color taking the painter major efforts.[23] We can deduce that the invention and the synthetic execution are like two fundamental principles of his pictorial work. The first consists in simple or compound figures which refer to their referential sources and occupy the surface of the canvas, in accordance with a personal creativity, reformulating the data into a lattice structure. In terms of synthesis, it is, at bottom, a traditional principle found in Al- Mawardi under the name " al'ilfatou al'jâmia". This is the synthesis of a shape of traditional dimension and a rigorously studied modernist color.

Samir Triki strives to ensure a harmony between the homogeneous or disparate elements, deliberately and carefully assembled on the surface of the canvas. Obviously, the coloring must be modernist, on the basis of oil or acrylic painting, unlike the decorator painter or the amateur of the arabesque. In this regard, let us recall the two problematic issues that are the drawing as a composed work and the colorful painting as a plastic and completed aesthetic work. In this perspective, when we look at the works of Triki, we notice the predominance of a color characterized by certain dynamism and optical, vibratory and disruptive effects to the eye. The plastic operations are constantly changing and diversifying based on the work requirements and the conception of each project. The color choices are increasing and we find in each new canvas another data (contrast, specular reflection, rotation, displacement). The work appears as a coat color interspersed with rigor and which realizes the aesthetic intentions. These are in connection with the optical, dense effects, of local and regional heritage, as well as the art of modern artists of the West, like Lazzarelli. We also discover in Triki a quest for chromatic balances and the indices of a particular plastic sensitivity such as transparency, light contrasts of lights, colors and intensities.

In addition, we can detect in some of his paintings, the dominant chromatic contrast that determines the presence of figures and the finished look of the work. The reticular figures appear quite slightly in the foreground of intersection and become stronger and clearer in the background, revealing the square forms at the bottom of the canvas. The colors tend to be more diluted, the green, the yellow, the blue and the red get entangled. Moreover, the color contrast is dominant in the relationships between the square figures in the foreground and the concentrated figures where the dark red predominates in the background.

The techniques of oil and ink painting enabled Triki to various color mixtures, meticulously implemented. What deserves to be remembered here is the logical difference between the appearance of figures and the reticular structures, in relation to the frame space which inspired the painter. The latter also clearly proclaims and seeks to highlight

it. He chose the coloring and the finishing of the plastic project as a main aspect of the contrast between the traditional spirit , fully colored with the available material and the modern techniques that make possible the balances , as much as the optical disturbances, euphoric perturbations , at the level of reception and perception at once.

Calligraphy ... ... Aesthetics…. Limited modernity.

Yassine Nsayyer

I

This study is primarily concerned with calligraphy as an art related to religion and heritage, and based on the Arab-Islamic philosophy. It will address the issue of the different adequate or inadequate calligraphic guidelines for such a vision, as well as the relationship of calligraphy and aesthetics with the concept of plastic modernity to understand if it consists of a relationship of submission or insubordination to this philosophy.

First, we note that calligraphy is not limited to the use of the letter. It is an art form that combines the form with the word, since the color can perform the function of a calligraphic language. Formerly, the language was originally a visual language, as far as the sound first served conventionally this or that idea. [(1)] It seems to me that more than an investigation, which is necessary for the researcher, in particular, with respect to the philosophical vision that governs the operation of calligraphy, its current and future spirit. Thus, the passage from calligraphy to aesthetics and to modernity cannot be done without cognitive bridges, enriched by the particular experiences of the Arab artists and the calligraphic movement worldwide. His understanding is not an easy undertaking for a single search. Calligraphy is not the interest of a single artist, or even the distinction of one region of the Muslim world, to the exclusion of others. Rather, it is an artistic movement which draws on the source of the Arab-Islamic philosophy, transgresses it, mimics the current global trend and undergoes its influence.

The current observation of the evolution of calligraphy derived from the inventions and the interculturalism allows us to see that it was the concern of various fields: arts, architecture, decoration and printing. So when we talk about this artistic field, we think about its complex centuries- long history, ranging from the pre-Islamic times to the present. It is present in so many cultures and artistic practices, that it has enriched and

from which it has benefited, that we consider, at present, as a full movement, whether in the East (India, China, Japan, Iran, Turkey, the Middle East) and North Africa, or in the Western world, which has been positively influenced by the oriental arts in general, within the 18th and the 19th centuries. Therefore, calligraphy is neither limited to geographical borders, nor to specific artistic fields as a basis for its historical study.

II

Then, it should be noted that it is an ongoing design in itself, because it does not use only the letter, but the alphabets of all manual and intellectual activities. The word: *hirfa* (literally: profession, craft) is derived from the word *harf* (letter), which means that the alphabet of the cabinet making, the agriculture and other crafts like knitting and plumbing, or the popular arts, literary and intellectual can give calligraphic products, dotted with specific alphabets. Our concern is not about the aesthetic of all these areas, but we had to mention the size of the field, especially from the point of view of the Arab-Islamic philosophical thought.

The four concepts that make up the title of this study : *letters, aesthetics, modernity and limited* imply in themselves a critical issue , since they mean the use of three different conceptual domains. There is precisely the Arabic alphabet that generated the script, then, the cultural background which gave the signs and the calligraphic image and abstraction. However, in the spirit of the artist, the Arabic letters are not separated from the philosophical vision of Islam, especially its religious thought. Whatever the direct and symbolic art forms that emanate from calligraphy, and whatever are its materials and compositions, they fall all within the religious reference of the Arab- Islamic philosophical principle, which is the oneness of God. The power of this philosophical reference is that which determines all the intellectual and social activities of the Muslim. Thus, the referential structure is not only intellectual, but institutional, that is to say, it determines the way of thinking and living, as we will explain in details, throughout this study.

Artistically, it will not be easy to understand practically the relationship between calligraphy and the Arab-Islamic philosophy, without a spatial location. The linearity of the calligraphy, which embraces the space (the sheet, the wall, the canvas) and forms a legible and visible optical mass, in such a combination with the components of the painting, is an attempt to visually and concretely embody this philosophical vision, to transmit the divine uniqueness of its transcendental origin to reality. It is therefore less than an aesthetic appreciation more than a spiritual activity in which calligraphy has the secret and the ability to make it palpable. It even gives us the feeling, while contemplating his works, to be closer to God.

As we will see later, this aesthetic revolution of calligraphy is attributable to the

strength of the Arab- Islamic philosophy in the transformation of an art into a philosophical structure that monitors the religious , protects it, gives it more impact and opens up for it new access to receive all thoughts. If the letters are used as an optical artifact by handling either of a single letter or more, they are transformed into a meaningful abstraction in an abstract space too, despite their legibility and visibility. In other words, thanks to art, the letters become a composite image that conveys the divine spirit to the real life. The process has first decoration and utility, then, it finally became aesthetic and philosophical, going through an infinite number of other internal changes.

As for the concept: *aesthetics*, which intervenes in our title, it means a method for evaluating and directing the work, from some samples of artistic works, the objective is to identify the artistic value. We do also treat us calligraphy as a creation which releases man from the direct and transitive vision of the religious practices, and opens up for him a horizon on the transcendental dimension of the calligraphic image, which means on the spirit that binds letters to God. We will see that it is here that one of the axes of the aesthetics that determines all the operations of the calligraphic paintings, including the most modern of them. According to this definition of aesthetics, we will study the evolution of calligraphy (formal effects to the absolute size), and we will analyze three relational levels: calligraphy and religion, calligraphy and space, calligraphy and ground. The aesthetics, as a religious practice, marks a turning of the being and the relationships between the Creator and His creatures. We will explain it through some examples of works of some painters who practice calligraphy in a certain formal and conceptual progression.

With regard to the concept of : *modernity*, to which we appeal, it concerns the style according to which calligraphy is turned into a speech and a comprehensive approach which include painting , of course, but also all the artistic styles in progress. As we shall see, it consists of a limited modernity, whose intellectual and formal remarkable developments have allowed it to release some religious chains imposed on it by some international businessmen, although without departing from its general philosophical referentiality, indicated above. It is therefore not as free as implied by the concept of the Western modernity. That is to say, it remains attached to its philosophical origins where aesthetics has a key objective which is to be closer to God, thanks to the word. Here is a conception of modernity that is of a precise and mysterious magnitude at once, that we cannot control all dimensions here . it makes part of the social and the common , but also of a philosophical , intellectual and cultural vision that determines all kinds of activities involved in the social progress.

So, this conceptual trinity is characterized by its qualitative magnitude and its relationships with the cognitive fields belonging to different eras. The material of the letters is in fact as ancient as man, while aesthetics and modernity are generated from

philosophical movements and recent civilizations. If we want to go through it here, we must renounce many theories that hinder us, on the one hand, to synthesize concepts and, on the other, to adapt them to a contemporary context.

III

Diversify the sources

The actual characteristic of Islamic Art is recognized especially when they are compared to similar arts. Is the Arabic calligraphic aesthetics, then the result of the influence of the hieroglyphic and ancient Nabatean writings, whose remains are known, and discovered in the 3rd century of the Hegira and reused as a model in the ornamentation of graves and some paintings? Does it rather come exclusively from the Arab- Islamic philosophy and its cognitive developments? Did it gain an artistic value when the Arab calligraphers and others have devoted the idea of the oneness of God in their works? Or is it the result of contact with other cultures and civilizations, thanks to translation and the works of the orientalists? Or is it even due to all of these sources at once?

When we study the relationship between calligraphy and religion, we detect the mystical and abstract nature of this art which uses the energy of the calligrapher contemplating God. In this regard, the Arabic language is crystallized in pictures, words, and then in the grounds, in compliance with the function of an obstructive and sacred structure which dedicates its aesthetic to the principle of God's unity. Even if the arts of the ancient and modern calligraphy have evacuated the narrative, the testimonies and religious tale, unlike the Christian arts (painted stories of prophets in the churches), they focused on the principle of the oneness of God. It comes in thousands of different ways in the work on the letters, in an autonomous mode, which highlights the particular richness, capable, by themselves, to provide sufficient ground to cover the surface of the canvas, incomparable with other arts.

Some samples show how the calligraphy invented several plastic possibilities to embody its own aesthetic in the place of worshipping. Its critique is problematic because, in front of a canvas, we feel deprived of these methodological criteria that facilitate its interpretation. The campaign is beaten in various critical directions, either by going back to Islamic sources, or by referring to the modern abstract art, or by invoking a particular former artist, Arab or Western. We then believe that the calligraphic criticism is part of the overall vision within the culture and the Arab-Islamic philosophy, which is not beyond the scope of the construction / deconstruction, and whose motivation is the fear of falling into the profane interpretation of the calligraphic work. Adonis wrote about this:

The alphabet is an abstraction. That is why it is rich. Its unveiling power is deeper;

and is clearer and more durable than the image. In addition, the language of the letters is closer to the soul and the consciousness than is the image. So, it is more permeable to significant loads. The divine abstraction is then made by the abstraction of words. The transcendental encoding and the linguistic encoding correspond. God is indeed a word, not an image, he is intangible using images that suggest an optical illusory perception, but still tangible through words whose places are the mind and the heart, which themselves are abstractions.[2]

Personally, I believe in the assistance of all these sources in the evolution of the calligraphy. Today, we see some works, such those of Madiha Omar, where the divine is eliminated in favor of a purely aesthetic and modernist style, in addition to works of spiritualistic trend, and others of ornamental and decorative function, and so on . Now, calligraphy has indeed become a modern art movement that allows us to opt for an open critical approach.

IV

It would undoubtedly be a little easier, even risky approach, since calligraphy has faced a number of religious barriers, restricting the use of this art to a transcendental function, which other religions got rid of, namely; decoration, miniatures and arabesques. Notwithstanding these obstacles, we will try to find the appropriate methodological grid reading of calligraphy. It is a modern art partially separated from its former religious processes; and is rooted in different values of the modern context, thus helping to explain some aspects of modernism, without completely abandoning its ancient philosophical vision.

It admits the requisites of art in general. It is therefore far from confining itself categorically in a priori that are cognitive. It is opened on the progress and the otherness to decide by itself whether to renew faithfully the philosophical spirit of Islam, or to devote the influences of the West, or to just endorse the diverse experiences of artists and calligraphers. Our goal here is only to follow the course of calligraphy, without sticking anything on it a priori. Because many human activities, such as literature, dance, singing and music, were not bound by the religious functionality, and some of them have been abandoned and have completely disappeared.

Calligraphy is based on letters. Its specific artistic vision gives it an aesthetic value in relation to the contemporary conception of the religious. The works of Al- Wassiti, although formerly produced, they subsequently acquired the artistic significance that suits them. The *Thousand and One Nights* are now part of the world cultural heritage, thanks to their vast fantasy, folk tales and hagiographies, also rich in exciting social and tribal histories, are now among the oral component of Arabic cultural background. It is, in all

scenarios, art forms, that some of which appeared before the Islamic era, but have been renewed with Islam and progressed towards modern artistic designs. However, they have not been marked with the seal of the sacredness, as calligraphy has been, and which reached a very important rank among the arts in the spotlight, thanks to its transcendental dimension.

In the available studies and researches, we identify three theories about the consecration of calligraphy as one of the modern plastic arts. For the first, it is only an authentic form which evolved over its aesthetic origins descending from the Arabic alphabet and the Islamic arts. For the second, it had a lot of influence on the Western arts and the Orientalist artists who got inspired by before adapting it to their vision, and according to modern technical means, then, they have totally integrated it in the European modernist mainstream., finally, the third focuses on the mystical dimension of calligraphy. We will try to tap into these theories of useful elements to our study, without going into details.

Regarding the first, and through a reading of the roots of calligraphy, we find that it has evolved in three stages. First, that of the miniaturization which will be a basis. It is here an abstractive space art, for which the part functions as a core of a whole, which has a meaning and how it evokes the energy through accumulation, which is not a mere repetition. The part is this miniature world that contains the whole universe. This spatial design, which makes from a single word such as God the meaning of a plurality of words, has cognitive foundations on which repetition is also a variation and a renewal. The voice that takes the name of Allah during the rituals and prayers is not a mere repetition of the word, but a renewed and amplified scansion by the process of repetition. So, the small nuclei contained in a letter become large nuclei through repetition, the miniature is thus a core before being a particle. The art of miniature is present in the aesthetic treatment of the letter, as while the calligrapher uses his hand, it becomes a word, then a mass, image and scope. In all this, the letter retains its impregnation with the divine spirit and creates, for the eye, this artistic realm of visual nature and extraordinary value, to which the gradual colors and movements of the brush give an extra expressive value.

This approach helps to entrench calligraphy in its religious function, since the look is cannot dissociate from it, even in the case of a non- sacred use. Indeed, the letter subsumes a world that surpasses it by far, in accordance with the spirit of the miniature.

Concerning the line derived from the point, it should be noted that the miniature was used in the structure of the optical form as the material that disregards reality and re- sets the transcendence in a contemplative manner. Actually, the miniature is as a gateway to an imaginary hereafter, in accordance with an aesthetic organization of the space. All of the spiritual attention given to this latter shows how the plastic configuration is allegorical,

while breathing life and giving it grace and expressive climax.

The second step in the evolution of calligraphy is that of the decorative arts. They had a leading role thanks to the flexibility of the calligraphic expression. They are defined as an imaginary structure to contain the dimensions of a conceivable and understandable optical vision. This structure takes a wide variety of shapes and moves forward, up, down, turns on itself, with continuous undulations like a wave which would come in any utensil surfaced in its movements, and which would draw, for our look, a multidimensional image. This expressive artistic energy has enabled calligraphy to a both visual and metaphysical breakthrough, connecting the real to the imaginary, the image to its readings, and provides access to a specific color surface. This is what gives some flexibility to the mass of the painting. This point is very important and we will analyze it studying the calligraphic aesthetics where readability of letters is abandoned by the modern painting in favor of an immanentist practice, which has a lot of influence on the great painters, such as Toni Martinet says in his study.

What is important in the relationship of calligraphy with the decorative arts, is its plastic structure which includes two types: curved lines and straight lines. These two methods made that this art has absorbed all the space and manipulated it in bypassing the Islamic taboos and prohibitions. It will be seen that the detours and the sinuosities enrich later the abstract art with a certain spiritual energy of the line, promoting the empowerment of the shape and partially liberate it from the religious influence. We will also see that the decorative art will open to various fields such as architecture, the interiors of homes, mosques and other places. It will pave the way for painting, particularly with regard to the wave motion, repeating the patterns and the colorful elements on the surface of the canvas. (4) This will be taken up by a number of Western artists, including Picasso and Paul Klee, who is considered as the spiritual father of the Western calligraphy and inspired many oriental artists, like Shakir Hassan Al Said, Nja Mahdaoui and others.

The third step is that of the art of writing itself. It has transformed tree forms into poetic forms, to the point of abandoning the image. In the Arabic art, there are many poetic contributions in relation to calligraphic, like that of the Iraqi Nasser Mooness, who greatly affected the calligraphic evolution described here. In fact, the Islamic scripture has to do with the philosophy of the spiritual depths of man and it is part of a specifically human culture, regardless of the country where it is used. It is this spiritual secret that transforms lines into communication media with the transcendence, that the West has embraced and refined the processes, to take advantage from them and integrate them in expressionism as much as the abstract art. Hubert Rude wrote in this regard:

The abstract expressionism, as an artistic movement, is nothing but a practice and an extension of the calligraphic abstraction, conceived as an individual expression. From

here, we notice its close relationship with the Eastern calligraphic art. [(5)]

The Greek scholar, Alexander Polo notes in turn: The *Arabic script is an avant-garde art and a founder. It has a unique place compared with calligraphy of other peoples.*

What justifies such an assertion is that calligraphy is based on a religious philosophy in which it draws strength and method.

Siegfried Calò, a German critic, while visiting an exhibition held in Baghdad in 1973, said about it:

In everything I've seen, I have not found a single product that reveals its Arabic source and is concerned with it, except those works that have links with the language.

Obviously, it means, hence the Arabic language and its religious depth. Because calligraphy is a revolution in and through language. As for the Spanish genius Picasso, he acknowledged once that the letters and the curves of calligraphy form an amazing material, and that the paroxysmal item he wanted to achieve in painting, he had discovered in the Islamic writing, which he had anticipated for a long time in this path. (6) Thus, the Arabic calligraphy was the aesthetic form around which are unified the tastes and the looks of Muslims, in the decorative art of mosques, from Mongolian and Caucasian countries, to the Albanian and Turkish minarets, in the north, passing by the Arab- Islamic countries. This artistic unity was even more powerful as languages, because the Arabic script being the language of the Qur'an, conveys the message of Mohamed worldwide and will be so forever.

V

These three steps are not successive but intertwined, allowing calligraphy to include in its course a social theme constantly adopted by miniatures, the decorative arts, writing and the calligraphic aesthetics, finally making the optical plastic of religious value a true pictorial discipline. However, this process requires techniques, designs, experiments and a theoretical basis. Transforming the vowel sound in an artistic mass remains indeed the purpose of calligraphy. The plastic processes enshrined in the various formal handlings of a single letter (return and repetition, among others) are only a secret and deep rooted language in a philosophical reading of the universe, where the sensitive refers to the transcendence and the mass invokes a visual adoration. Therefore, this conservative philosophy is not limited to religious, stringent precepts, but extends its scope to letters, words, painting and poetry. The artistic work that is thus carried out by going to the metaphysical reality, goes beyond the intent. It means the Divine Being , in favor of an iterative and mystical unity that inhabits the word .

It is not here a question of a worship of God, which is limited to the use of words,

but a worship which, thanks to the visual scanning of words, brings the feeling of greater closeness to God, of a physical submission to the spiritual power of words, where the repetition leads to the union of the immanence with the transcendence. It must be understood that calligraphy, as an evolved form of the language, is favorably accepted in Islam. It is not a figurative art, but a painting of the words in them, with this same depth of mysticism, whose keystone is the negation of the visible world and the rejection of the rational atheism. In this sense, the calligraphic writing conveys the transcendental truth, the miniature opens the doors of hope, painting depicted the existence, writing devoted worship and dedicated itself as a religious language.

The Imam Ali said in this regard: "*The beautiful handwriting tells the truth in a clearer light*," linking then the divine truth with beauty, truthfulness and clarity. He also says that *writing is one of the most worthwhile things and the most joyful one, (7)* which means that it brings joy to each individual. Ibn Abbes said, in the sense, that writing is the language of the hand. In other words, it is the art of transforming the written into speech, since the language and the hand annihilate the image and reveal the sense of the infinite truth.[(8)]

Considering another field, there is a very close relationship between the various forms of the Arabic art, like the arabesques, calligraphy and classical poetry. This one, for example, is based on the sound and the musical repetition to go beyond, this secret that inhabits the soul of a people. In fact, poetry bears the traditions of the people, his culture and identity. It is thus seen how Islam had a rather negative attitude towards poetry presenting the world with the words, apart from the useful representation to the believers.

There is a real correspondence between the spatial rhythm of the writing and the rhythm of the poetic iteration. It is a kind of a cultural balance between the first, devoted to the absolute spiritual and second, reserved for things in life. Obviously, this formal correspondence between the two is not relevant to the visible, but the observation of the rhythms in both arts identifies the resemblance. We cannot explain this amazing phenomenon and claim to limit the inestimable success of the Islamic calligraphy. We just want to see the equal audience of both arts of divergent aims.

Far from being just a linear representation of the human immanence, calligraphy remains, ultimately, moored to a conservative philosophical matrix, that uses the art of writing for a specific spiritual purpose, that of preserving the principle of the oneness of God . Fundamentally linked to Qur'an, it gives the absolute priority to the interiority versus the exteriority, to infinity compared to the actual determined, to the invisible in relation to visible. Al'kalima (word) is seen as feminine. It is then pregnant of initial energies of creation and always makes us witness the infinity. When it turns into a calligraphic figure, it recalls its transcendental vocation. The movements it embraces (ondulation ,

return, backlash, entanglement, symmetry, rotation...) embody all dimensions, subsume all the signs (word, line, color) and only stop at a particular element of the visible when it consists of a threshold into the invisible.(9)

VI

From the perspective of the theory of sources and the influence, the critical states that the Islamic arts were known in Europe in the late of the 18th century and earlier in the 19th century, that is to say at the time when this continent lived a cultural, intellectual and economic Renaissance, and opened trade routes towards China and India, via the East. The thought of Saint- Simon, in France, under Napoleon II, was the key driver of the Suez Canal project to link the Europe with the East, promote trade and explore the wonders and treasures of the world. This was a consequence of the European progresses in the fields of industry, finance, trade, culture and military power. Some Arabic masterpieces have been translated into European languages , among other *Thousand and One Nights, Rissalat al-Ghofran* of Maarri and other works on astronomy, medicine and philosophy.

At this time of struggle between science and sacred, Goethe wrote his masterpiece: *Faust* (1831). Therefore, the Europe wanted to get rid of the yoke of the Church in favor of the intellectual and technological progress. The same period also witnessed the discovery and dissemination of the Oriental Arts, thanks to, for example, diplomats, discerning travelers, artists traveling to the East, as well as eastern painters who organized exhibitions of Arabic and Islamic works in some European countries. In 1873, stands of European exhibitions were devoted entirely to this eastern and partly Ottoman art. Tunisians and Algerians had exposed Islamic decorative canvasses, miniatures and calligraphic paintings. This diffusion affected several European cities, which led to the phenomenon of Orientalism, as stated by Edward Said.

Nevertheless, we must have a thorough rethink about our being apart from the representation that the West has reserved to us. The plastic arts can be here for our use to reclaim our image, in this space that calligraphy acquired thanks to its modern size, which extends beyond the geographical boundaries. Outside the influence of exhibitions of the Arab- Islamic art, some of the world renowned artists such as Delacroix, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Kandinsky, Max Ernst, Matisse, Paul Klee, Cocacha, Tris, Picasso and others had favored, in their travel and trips, the Middle East, North Africa and especially Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and the Far East. They sought there specific art forms, this spiritual energy of the oriental culture, and having been influenced by their findings, they developed what has mostly marked them in their exploration, according to their own vision. The most notable examples are Renoir, Matisse, Picasso and Paul Klee.

The question that arises now concerns the interest of the cultural, economic and

political movement for calligraphy. Technically speaking, there are a number of indications of the influence of the Western culture, which can be summarized in five points:

- First, the appearance of some schools where calligraphy opts for some exclusive aesthetics, like the expressionism and the abstract art.

- Secondly, the fact that many famous and experienced artists were sensitive to the aesthetic value of the letter, such as Picasso and Paul Klee, who draw processes in the spirit and the essence of the East.

- Third: the modern thought, the techniques, the modernization projects, the expansion of trade and industry, the power of money, nationalism, the emergence of the working class, the Marxist thought, all these and other factors have opened up new markets and expanded the utility space for the arts. The increase in the number of exposures makes it obvious.

- Fourth: the growing of the phenomenon of interculturalism enabled exchanges in the fields of art, science, philosophy, thought and medicine. The influence of the Andalusian era in Europe was very great in philosophy, but also in trade, particularly between North Africa and Europe, which has encouraged many artists to reside for long periods in Maghreb countries.

-Fifth: the oriental culture is characterized by intellectual and formal flexibility that shapes its spiritual strength and the Faustian spirit in the background of the technological progress.

Aesthetics

VII

After analyzing the sources and the basic concepts, it is necessary to study the philosophical substrate that determines the evolution of calligraphy. We note that there is a fundamental philosophical referentiality that is constructive and conservative spirit coming in five principles. According to us, they summarize all the Arab-Islamic thought, its social representations and cultural policies, including those related to arts and literature.

Aesthetics seems from this perspective as a study of a relationship involving two representatives: the calligrapher, from letters, creates a contemporary work in distinctly preserving their spiritual dimension, and the recipient who changes taste and opinion in response to the systematic and progressive treatment of the form and function of traditional calligraphy.

It should be noted here that there is an underground struggle between the progress of means of communication reception of the modern society, the attachment of calligraphy

to the religious thematic which restricts its evolution.

This dialectic emulation which opposes the spirit of the creator and the recipient's reaction generated an internal revolution, in the sense that modern aesthetics has internalized the spiritual significance of calligraphy. Thus, the artist preserves the fundamental spirituality of this art while adapting his technique to the economic, cultural and architectural progress. He keeps the letter as base material and anchoring theme, but he acts on its structure and its plastic function, integrate it into the pictorial space, explores within it the expressive potential to release so little of its former uses (miniature and writing), granting it with new ones, thanks to the calligraphic canvas.

Our aim is now focused on the submission / insubordination of calligraphy to the conservative, referential spirit. The principle of the divine Unicity, complex and unifying, necessarily controls everything: language, culture, religion, governance system, sharia, exegesis, law, society, work, thought, etc.

The word and the writing that convey this spiritual structure are the axis of the conservative vision because no other function is permitted within the canvas. Therefore, their responsibility lies within the Arab-Islamic philosophical mission and responsibility of its diffusion. The challenge here is to provide an aesthetic evolution that does not harm the conservative spirit of the spiritual structure, based on the principle of divine Unicity.

In this specific context, calligraphy was able to free itself from rigidity by varying its specific choices, incorporating to them the new forms and techniques, opening to different cultures and getting rid of old formal, conformists usages. This transgression represents a conservative evolution, as it subordinates the ancient with the new and expands the aesthetic field of the calligraphic art. The destruction of the ancient, albeit limited by the signs of the fundamental conservatism, and is revolutionary in itself. It managed through the interaction with various cultures, and this is in favor of modernity, without abandoning its roots and foundations in a similar way to the modernization of poetry.

Some works have tried to completely abandon their spiritual referentiality, but being attached to the origins of the very nature of the letters, they were quick to reconnect with the conservative spirit , with, however, the advantage of a plastic renewal which made from it a model of creation. There has been a period of groping and hesitation between the die-hard conservatism and the transgressive and destructive temptation, which can be summarized in a double movement: a step forward followed by two steps back. The novelty of this dialectic is that during this period of hesitation, calligraphy has not completely left behind its origins and is not quite open to modernity. It moved forward while looking back. This dynamic of the retention / destruction determines every modernization project in the field of the aesthetic calligraphy.

In a word, we can say that artists introduced in calligraphy a methodological

change by step, to make possible some progress that does not fundamentally contradict its philosophical foundations. As we will see in some paintings, it consists in a limited modernity.

VIII

To analyze the calligraphic paintings in accordance with this spiritual, aesthetic vision, we will discuss three types:

1- The cognitive and figurative canvas of conservative dimension.

2 - The calligraphic canvas where writing closes on the pictorial surface and announces the beginning of insubordination to conservatism and the liberating quest. Freedom of expression, the magnification of letters, the use of popular mythology borrowed from heritage are here characteristic features.

3 - Added to this, in some works, the temptation of an entirely free calligraphy on one hand, and the choice of a conditioned freedom, that is to say a destructive attempt where calligraphers choose symbolism. This results in *limited modernity and a constructive deconstruction.*

Generally, calligraphy has not renounced the spiritual aesthetic of writing. Words, phrases, verses, maxims remain clearly legible and their forms affect us as would the mystic emotion does. In fact, writing increases the spiritual impact of the calligraphic canvas, transcending the literal meaning of words and letters. But it simultaneously reveals a visual aesthetic executed with a very modern sophistication, which means that the craftsmanship of the calligraphic canvas depends on the skill of the artist in terms of precision, perfection and originality. Obviously, all the paintings are not equally created in this regard. They contain various styles of performance and specific methods.

With Sakr, for example, there are two ways to do it. One uses a circular ground over a wide area which serves as a spiritual background, insofar as the indeterminate space evokes the absolute. The other focuses the work on the letters themselves, deepens the highlight of their internal relations, as if it were hugs of family members. Generally, this second way is more horizontal and covers the entire pictorial surface. This occults the spiritual dimension by the powerful presence of the letters, whose own potential is needed for the look, without being completely cut off from their original referentiality. However, both methods remain rooted in the conservative dimension where the letter is associated with the absolute spirit. The paintings of Sakr bind then the poeticity of life to the matrix memory in perfect cohesion with the natural mysticism of the Arabic letter.

As for the calligrapher Salah Shérazade, being concerned, first, by its artistic value, he insists on the visibility of writing. He builds with them expressive grounds designed by

a spiritual perspective, thanks to colors, precise dosages, to which he attributes a mystical significance. The letters then have more impact on the eyes, the structure of the canvas is more meaningful and remains faithful, in all this, to its conservative function. Most of his figures suggest, in this sense, the shape of domes or minarets, as if they were part of a prayer. Shérazade also broadens the base of his paintings to give them the aspect of an object of invincible ancient heritage, while creating a writing in levitation. All these forms are executed according to the types of the ancient writing " rokâ ", " nasskh ", " kufic ", but on a contemporary medium; the canvas, using modern colors.

With regard to Soydan , the surface of the canvas and the ground are merging, and he does not found his own work on the structure of writing, but a borrowed figure. His flexibility consists probably in making the letter an interpretative card that evokes the figures and applies to the perception through its visual impact. This decorative vision exploits the spiritual dimension of letters in favor of works of commercial craftsmanship, and economically exploitable.

Also belongs to this tendency the work of Hamad Farouk Haddad. His works occupy a noticeable and substantial spatiality where writing embodies an arborescent decorative ground that imitates the immediacy , which eventually suggest a spiritual representation through the drawnfigures .

I especially admire here the paintings of Hamad Issa Khalfan, for their internal balance between, on the one hand, the flexible and powerful writing, and on the other, the poetic extent of execution. The writing here is not highlighted to the detriment of the surface of the canvas, but both participate in a certain balance made by this poetic sensibility. This brings us to the obvious spirituality of lines, without being prominent in the body of the letter.

In the case of Taj Hassan Esser , we notice that he strives to transform the calligraphic work in a kind of big imprint of his vision of heritage, somewhat blurred by an atmosphere of melancholy and ancient culture. However, he builds a modern icon practicing a populist and general calligraphy. It may take the form of an amulet or a prayer of talismanic effect, because the exploitation of the mythological emotion associated with letters is supposed to emphasize the spiritual powers of the calligrapher's work.

With respect to the paintings of Hakim Ghazali, there is a more increased interest given to the surface of the canvas, at the expense of the letter itself. He transcribed a phrase or verse, which he spreads the calligraphic ramifications on the pictorial space, without much care for the potential of letters, in preserving their spiritual sacredness, that reminds the method of Shakir Hassan Al Said. Focusing on colors and their gradation on the surface of the canvas, he subordinates them to writing as if it were a simple, expressive extra-value. So most of his lines are horizontal, which reveals a dialogic structuring and

a transitive discursive targeting an implicit recipient. The canvas can thus be read in different ways, as can also be seen in the works of Adnan Itil, of populist character, although it is a rather special populism.

I am also very touched by the art of the Iranian Rida Abdini that I have seen the works in the Netherlands, at the reception organized by the Foundation of the Prince Klaus, where he was awarded the Grand Prize of the year 2006. There is in his paintings a kind of drama that involved the immanence and the transcendence, the approved man facing the political order. The religious significance is present therein; the spiritual trace is indelible in the letters. Sometimes using different alphabets (Persian, Arabic, English), he seems to accentuate the aesthetic language of letters and submit it to the concerns of the contemporary man. Thus, his paintings contain an explicit discourse and express dramatically some social conflicts. The artist occupies the space of his paintings by a spread handling of letters, to the extent that the iterative structure becomes a visual rhythm, obsessed with the divine uniqueness, and at the same time firmly attached to the sufferings of the contemporary man. There are all clues that reveal the presence of the latter, because it is constantly dedicate the spiritual quest of a language issue.

There is then in the works of Abdini a figurative dominant that mixes forms and thoughts, and where letters occupy the role of a link between the two. The daily concerns of the contemporary man are ubiquitous: injustice, war, cruelty, frustration, loneliness. A closer look also reveals a contemporary structure, rebellious and always attached to the spirit of heritage. The artist chooses a vertical dominant, which means the communication between the earthly and the heavenly world. The man is not absent, for example, in the collages of human pictures with transcripts that are subject to the heart of the contemporary world, where the individual is under the yoke of industrial society and signs.

In this analysis, we have roughly drawn three aspects:

1- The calligraphy has remained focused on an essential aesthetic object that is the working on the letters.

2 - The canvas draws on spirituality and mysticism. Even while dealing with subjects such as politics or the current events, and while drawing in poetry, its conception and structure remain rooted in a fundamental spirituality.

3 - calligraphy remains limited, if we may say so, to a principle of dynamic conservatism and does not break with its ancient aesthetics.

IX

The paintings we have analyzed devote figuration and mythology. The calligraphic representation is then an exploration of the power and the expressive potential of the

letter. Writing is there developing en masse, trying to release itself from the old chains which submit it to spirituality, and to grant it with a social and human significance. Mythicization carries the same desire for liberation, but it remains limited. It consists here in the combination of writing with the popular culture (talismans, customs and traditions, crafts), that is to say, with a method that replaces the divine spirit which a daily spirit showing the actual sufferings.

Both methods (figurative and mythology) reflect an evolution of the die-hard conservatism, as we discussed above, towards a committed aesthetic to the social life, while retaining for the letter its roots in this religious referentiality where the names of God and prophets preoccupy the look of the man. We are therefore facing various aesthetic ways that depend on the personality of each artist and his ability to exploit the Western, artistic culture,. There is no evidence here of the total submission to the Eastern spirit, as artists use certainly the Arabic letters , but evoke an absolute spirituality, especially when they resort to popular mythology and combine letters with their pictorial forms of heritage themes.

We also notice a balance between the mass of the letter and the pictorial surface, with the particularities of each experiment. The covered space by the paint has the appearance of a separate painting, which can be transposed into any other canvas. Only letters provide a particular change, and are usually whole letters, otherwise pieces of letters. The cutting of the last conveys a power of expression specific to the shown parts, which are generally the beginning, and suggests those of the cut pieces. We get the impression to decipher a voice link between the utterance and the painting.

In the works of Dhia Azzawi, the parts of the represented letters seem to seek other parts which resemble them in the composition of other letters. It is a kind of structural and oral support aiming at elaborating a contemporary drama about the relationship of man with the real life. The letter *ayn* , for example, is detectable in the *hamza* , *mim* is also in *sâd, sine* in *ya, ra* in *zey* , *sâd* in *thâd*. As for the letter *noun,* it is a common factor in many others, the *point* is a common feature in several grounds. Some letters as *mim, ayn , noun* and *lem* are identifiable to spiritual matters, that is to say that the artist treats a strange aesthetic component to a letter, through suggesting to us the condition of the modern man, strange to life. Consequently embedded in reality, the calligraphic spirituality subsumes the man and his problems. The drama is the main thrust of the components of the fused or entangled letters.

Moreover, Dhia Azzawi frames the letters and the grounds by an internal and mobile square. He manages levels of expression that are differently dense and allows us to see structures of instantaneous accumulation. He is also adept when he brings together in the same canvas processes of various schools. So he aggregates the impressionism and the

abstract art, and practice of abstraction is not based on any other Arab experience, prior in the field ; but it is rather a way of being in tune with the European contemporary trends. exploring then the values and status of the modern man using his palette of calligrapher, it reflects a basic principle for him, there is no art without a human approach.

In the paintings on the covers of the magazine *Nazwa* , calligraphy leaves the field open to the freedom of painters. Flexibility is the very energy of the imagination. The wide and malleable canvas as can be changed its composition and imbues with optical poeticity, as if the pictorial surface was of interest only when it freely embraces all configurations of letters. The painting of Kamal Balata, for example, appears as a geometrical architectural construction whose solid language controls the letters and spreads and an open and iterative space. This evokes for us a concrete world and a certain urbanity of reinforced concrete. Such parallelism and such iteration represent the language of the linguistic repetition that goes back to the past and which are about our human condition, essentially iterative.

In the canvas of Mohamed Kassem Saiegh, we notice a harmony between the ground, the writing and surface in the context of a balanced composition which grants the solidarity between the earthly and the heavenly world an artistic and spiritual value. In that of Nja Mahdaoui, we can detect this aesthetic skill and dramaturgical perspective of things. The artist incorporates in his painting three vertical visions. The first is that of a fusion of languages (verticality and horizontality, reality and dreamlike, surface and depth). The second is that of a horizontal ground where the letters are highlighted, structures are repeated and figures are graded, as if they were filtering the ground of the first vision. The third, finally, is of a more contemporary style: it borrows from the first two the characteristics it mixes. The result is a mixture of religious and contemporary, human and linguistic conceptions. The first two grounds are arranged horizontally, while the third is vertical.

We come now to the issue of the drama that letters can represent; the question of their sociological dimension. The canvas of Wajih Nakhla refers us to the theme of the existential struggle of the Arabs, through the struggle of letters between them, on an ardent surface. The painter adds to his figures and motifs a contemporary aspect, in such a way that the past and the present appear intertwined in it. This dramatic structure is also one of the calligraphic possibilities to present the concerns of the real man, that we can detect the social dimensions through contemplation.

As for Hakim Ghazali, he returned in his canvasses to the method of the “unique dimension “ and clearly draws the letters and the complete sentences. The letter is not then for him a unique and exclusive material. What interests him is the statement whose meaning is catchable, and that he then seems to stick on the surface of the table.

For his part, Sakr opts for the visual composition, playing with the depth and shadows, and giving the letter like the incarnation of a dream amid an ambiguous and hazy reality. The magnification of the letter occupies the entire poetic harmonious surface for the eye. His calligraphic technique seems to be built on the aesthetic value of the letter and its rhythmic possibilities designed to focus on a centered reading on the ground.

In his turn, Mahjoub Ben Bella chooses in his canvas abstraction and repetition of letters, taking advantage of the figures of the popular carpets, accumulated configurations of letters and primitive motifs. This method ignores spirituality, it just wants to propose a visual ground that gives an impression of accumulative temporality, with common and graduated values.

In the perspective of such an abstractive conception, calligraphy remains conditioned by the reference to heritage, without just being its voice. It is an art that poetizes the traditional heritage with a contemporary approach, which is a transgressive evolution of some foundations of the ancient conservative vision. It is characterized in particular by the transformation of the ancient figures of letters, the implementation of current concerns, as well as heritage, inspiration drawn from Western art and the presence of the artist's personal taste. Here, we witness the first step on the path of a transgressive practice of the classic calligraphic principles.

X

According to a second trend, calligraphers give more interest in highlighting the expressive value of the pictorial surface and the mass of letters. The mixing of both trends tends to cut the canvas from its religious origins in blurring the pure spirituality and keeping another one purely material. Itil Adnan retains the sentence, rather than the letter; that it combines the popular linear figures, undulating according to masses of horizontal colors. It gets inspired from the popular carpets from which it derives a decorative and artistic process that anchors the language in reality. It then a sort of image that occupies the bottom of the canvas suggested by the applied method, and that evokes a classical background and impregnated with an oriental emotion.

Ibrahim Nour, reserves, in his turn, his attention to the subject of domes that he represents using certain letters. The arcuate structure is conducive to the mixture of reality and myths, which exudesthe impression of holiness, probably due to the hardness of life and thinking of an essentially spiritual painter. Therefore, his painting remains rooted in a religious heritage, without seeking any technical improvement in the aesthetic execution.

In the work of Kamal Balata, there was an evocation of heritage through the figures of ruins and letters representing two masses steeped in myths of the ancient background,

and refer to a modern discursive, particularly in regard to his vision of the freedom of speech censored in Palestine. This very sensitive painter to spirituality establishes a universal vision open to all human causes, despite his obsession with the Palestinian cause.

Furthermore, what fascinates me in the work of Bassam Saida is the design and the popular skilled craftsmanship, even if a technical mastery of this kind does not make an artist. For him, the theme of verticality is one of the constant concerns of an acute awareness of the religious dimension. It is from this constant theme that the religious discourse derives its sustainability and dynamism. In addition, the paint tends to mix arabesques, writing and figuration, which reproaches it to the technique of the wall mural rather than a decorative painting, in the artistic sense of the word.

In the paintings of Shakir Hassan Al- Said, we can see more than one artistic vision. In drawing in the popular tradition and the oral heritage, he somewhat waives the original referentiality of the letter. It is here the effect of experience, the pressed gesture and the little preoccupied shaping of a particular structure, which means, ultimately, a borrowed spontaneity from the popular heritage that took centuries to be embodied in such language and such forms. The frescoes of the painter lay bare memory, nullify the official history and substitutes the collective memories in the vision and the execution. No matter to him that the represented wall has shown unevenness and cracks, if he gives a full account of the human acts and if he can be this common register and this palimpsest where the life writing smoothes out and renews itself. Each of her paintings do also appear as a good history, dedicated to a cleared language by ephemeral actions. The work acquires from them a strong sustainability, as long as it receives the complaints of all time, infinite feelings and sensations. Such a popular book remains unfinished after the death of Al- Said.

On a canvas of Mahjoub Ben Bella, a number of expressive figures jostle at once: colors, accumulated letters, cuttings of the pictorial surface in masses and intertwined areas, often illegible letters. The painter is here trying to exploit the popular heritage and the uprooted memory from its language and its referentiality, to make from it the musically rhythmic instrument of the contiguity of various cultures. He seems haunted by exile and loneliness. However, his memory remains bound to the confusing heritage , of which only the letters remain, thoroughly affected by the progress and the impact of industrialization . They are no more than crushed traces, only readable in the light of the western civilization. This painting is, in short, one of those which embody the structure of the artistic exile, where the popular heritage is used as if it were a continuous and an unfinished story.

XI

The painting of Rachid Koraïchi can give a symbolic reading of the prison. The drawn chains using the letters depict the prohibitions restricting freedom and embody one of the themes of protest against censorship of language and confiscation of freedoms in the Arab- Islamic countries. The figures of the iron bars represented through letters, the doodles and the intersecting and bypassed lines represent the multiple powers of the inherited censorship since a long time, including the language itself.

Table Youssef Ahmed opts for another symbolism. Using the language of letters, the painter seems to invoke the climate of the earth and its sands, which gives his work a strong feminine symbolic. He seems to suggest the idea that the physical space provides us with all components of memory, and permits to leave the cramped environment and to engage in the world. Youssef Ahmed mimics the creation of the universe in reviewing the stories and the mythological traditions. He tells the story of the Earth and the letter at once, making them two human creations. On the other hand, he is prone to mix two visual practices, sculpture and calligraphy, especially when he uses sand to draw a miniature.

The work of Said Adoui symbolizes the popular heritage of Egypt, where there is an innate and primitive ability to connect heterogeneous figures mixed in a single mold. Thus, it is a space where the symbols of the popular and ancient heritage are assembled and arranged in a childlike sensitivity and interpretative power. This evokes in us serious questions about the fates that the amputees or unfinished letters have traced for the ordinary men in prayers, myths and offerings. This painting is a sample of those which gather on their surface the black grounds evoking heritage, with some clearings of the white color signifying hope, and ancient and modern Pharaonic and Islamic symbols. We have the impression that the painter wants to affirm the plural identity of Egypt. Because the represented village signifies the heritage and the closed horizon. Apart from this , all comments of modernity are applied to the rest of the painting where the childish spontaneity and certain calligraphic syntheses mingle.

The canvas of Ahmed Cherkaoui can be interpreted from different angles. There is a configured symbolism by the association between many themes, evoking the letters *ayn* and *noun,* firmly intertwined and rooted in the popular memory. To the eye, this work can reveal a powerful desire to mix the real and the imaginary and gives us the impression of being trapped in a cage, making the invisible world for us.

Such hard and sharp configurations are a part of the symbolic of violence. There is also a clearly legible drama that confronts the rear and the front of the ground, the absence and the presence. It is a pictorial construction which explicits our inability to express ourselves freely. There would also be another reading, according to which the canvas rearranges the letters in a dialectical relationship that prevents the collapse. All these

different readings are explained by the fact that the modern calligraphic figures remain hampered by an occult force . The artist has never escaped from his spiritual power, or his cruel exploitation by the established order; so they shelter themselves behind a curtain and prohibit any expressive impulse and any desire to pierce of them the censorial bark .

In the painting of Bellamine Fouad, strangeness seems to predominate. There are lines that descend from the frame or fall in, from the outside. The painter reorganizes a very dramatic scene as if he exposed to it the celestial phenomena that end up in order show men that language, letters or lines are capable of transforming the visions. Thus, it is no more a matter of reading them, but to meditate them. There is there a hidden cave that generates a dramatic story. There is also a picture of heritage that confused our look. We are subject to a plural, transcendental and immanent symbolic, showing o lot of mystery. It is a bit the fresco of Al- Said, but with a spiritual poeticity, rather than the same immanent and popular sensitivity of this latter.

For the first time, I find myself in front of a more hectic, more blatant and more creative painting, it is that of Mohammed Khadda. It uses the brush to draw his letters, so he takes away from them their original dimension, reorganizes them according to a contemporary vision of life, made of smooth, renewal, struggle and turmoil, as we saw in the daily life. There is no exit where our eyes can escape from this spiritual and earthly universe. This is a world that seizes us and keeps us prisoners of its completeness and its rotating momentum based on the concentrated organization of the universe. Much pressure prevents us from taking our view away from his language meaning all the condition of the chained man. Warm colors, overlapping configurations, links that generate in themselves, a boundless energy. Abstraction is present in all lines, colors and letters, and the sky that emanates from it has nothing to do with our familiar sky, but it is brought about by the anguished land and the drama of the deprived man.

Nja Mahdaoui, in his turn, is considered one of the geniuses of calligraphy. He has not only evolved it with the intellectual and spiritual points of view, but he has also snatched it from its traditional base and accessing it to the modern art, without completely abandoning its original function. In other words, his paintings offer two kinds of processing: to renounce the religious connotation, but in retaining the configuration of letters, to give another spirituality to the calligraphic drawings, constantly renewed and in dialogue with the collective memory.

We can notice in his works a lot of contemplation of history. So, his canvas is not closed or enclosed in the daily life. His figures and his pictorial structures always denote the technique of a senior artist and a higher skill. We read in the background verses or words of a rigorous elaboration, buried deep in the perspective of the painting, as if they came to us from a distant era. They seem polished, lilliputians like those of an ancient

civilization , miniaturized , and then organized into rectangles with graded colors and open on each other, with a sort of temporal holes that can describe the impossibility for us to perfectly get along with such distant origins. Finally, on these background motifs, Nja Mahdaoui traces his modernist calligraphic drawings, that are more flexible, more real, as human figures entering into the canvas, with a kind of standard above a familiar and ancient ground, while rounded and turning letters rushed towards a gaping horizon. It is a poem that combines the myths of heritage, modernity, stormy dramatic structure, animated by the modern life and executed by human hands.

The canvas of Salah Jmii is one of the most important calligraphic works that deal with the theme of the relationship between calligraphy and popular heritage. It is a narrative and dramatic text that is constructed on a multitude of conflicts, with four plans. There is a purple, light and dark foreground, like an old and worn carpet, on which dates, words and ancient gestures are stretched. Only a few letters from them remain poorly bonded, insignificant as they were trampled by horses legs . There is also a more familiar rectangle to us, high above the ground. It is filled with Arabic letters, differently designed by a kind of player hand. Between these letters skylights are arranged through which we see human heads buried in the religious and linguistic memory, and surrounded by other letters shapes of tombstones that hinder their look and freedom. Below, we can notice two squares drawn in part on the ground of the foreground and overflowing over the rest. Many Iraqi artists have exploited this power of the square and freely furnished it.

It is a structure that is borrowed from chest boxes, talismans and other popular objects. Even if it appears truncated part of its setting, it is surrounded by masses of letters, representing human figures approaching from afar. Jmii seems to tell us that we cannot escape from the power of heritage, even if we are at the heart of modernity. The painting overwhelmed with the purple suggests a bright composition lost in darkness and mystery, with sumerian and Arabic letters distributed at different levels. It is a synthesis of culture of the Tigris and the Euphrates. We feel attached to the earth- that we live rather than it inhabits us – in virtue of a poetic link which holds the human being in the space of the unforgettable heritage, regardless of the realized progress.

One of the other interesting paintings is that of Faisal Samra. The execution is both spontaneous, mastered and poetic. We can see there a certain attachment to the popular environment, especially in the motif of the hand holding an eye to exorcise evil. This topic raises conflicting sensations mingling the myths of the desert with the urban life. The vertical and horizontal lines evoke temporal overlap at the base of sand, letters and points, an anguished ground which seems to resurrect an ancient reality that has gone under the accumulated effects of the active and experienced men. But this reflects a world that remains confused, fragile and so mysterious at the same time. The black spots that are

drawn and dotted by a sensitive hand mean that the discovery of the terrestrial mysteries is at its beginning. The Saudi painter gives then free rein to his unconscious, to explore a land, sandy, secret, gummy and concrete horizon at a time. In this regard, the research of Shakir Hassan Al Said is clearly interested in the identification of these ancient structures rooted in their communities, and to extract from them their answers to the contemporary issues related to technique and progress.

In my opinion, what gives this painting all this importance is that its space is divided into two parts: the top and the bottom, separated by uniform colors: yellow for the sand, blue for the sea, pink for modernity. These colors are assembled like on a banner hoisted above an environment where light and dark and dreamlike figures intermingle. Through a few chips on the edges, the canvas is moving towards an ancient calligraphic configuration on the base of heritage symbols such as poems, tales and other traditional decorative items. That seems to be that the painter raises for us the lost wealth due to the traditional structure itself, but a wealth that subjugate us anyway. It then keeps us in a kind of vortex which we seek to escape from.

The Taj Esser Hassan's painting displays a calligraphy with maraboutic, misty and community-oriented themes. The painting reveals to us some vertically and horizontaly arranged letters which are poetically drawn, deeply rooted in their traditional soil and rising toward the sky like a prayer addressed to God. The black and the yellow tinted with white color reproduce a chiaroscuro vision." The artist reconstructs the glazed marabout space, combining Christian and Islamic configurations of various religious spaces. From their lights, he creates a hidden hope behind the story and the language of a network of accumulated places, which, however, prevent their access.

He just maintains continuity with men, through the lights emerging from them. This composition that steep in ancient and black grounds suggests an underground and antique spirituality. On the other hand, there reveals a freedom of expression and movement, flexibility in writing, a communication between heaven and earth, the individual and humanity. But many chains continue to hinder the movement of letters out of old frames. It is a canvas that detects the confusion of loving letters of modernity and, at the same time, attached to their spiritual origins.

XII

Madiha Omar (born in 1908 and pursued her studies in Beirut, Istanbul and London, then taught for several years in Baghdad), assembles innovative paintings in the field of calligraphy, where we reveal no religious connotation. This artistic and intellectual freshness belongs to the modern aesthetic and the spirit of research, and results logically from the training received in the west. In the five vanvasses analyzed here, and even

if religiosity is removed, there is maybe a mythological dimension developed from the archeology of the letter itself, its levels of figuration and its particular and deep potentials.

Madiha Omar treats her letters in large amounts. She extends them, expands their surface, transforms them into a solar spectrum, and covers them with colors, shows their connotations, malleability and flexibility, to fulfill the pictorial surface and saturate it with visions. All of this is done without having any relation with religion. In this regard, she responds to Nizar Salim with these words: *For me, every Arabic letter is an abstract image which denotes a particular meaning. And in spite of their expressive differences, these letters become for me a source of inspiration. The letter " ya" has a very strong polysemous personality. The letter "ayn" which has not an equivalent in the English alphabet is powerful and effective. It has two meanings in Arabic: water and eye. Concerning the letter "I", it allows the happening of light and musical moves. And since it is my conviction, I have made from the Arabic letters basic elements of my paintings. Thus, I have progressively transformed their flat and simple forms into intellectual, dynamic and expressive images. Even though I'm still experimenting, I have discovered in this alphabet possibilities which can have an impact on all creators. They then see in it meaningful images and thoughts rather than just colorful lines*[(12)].

Adel Kamal affirms from his part the following: *Madiha Omar does not destroy anything in her works: she does not opt for deconstruction. She gave to her imagination the possibility to recompose the forms and the letters transformed into signs and signals. However, this organization of the dramatic text does not tell a relatable story, but it makes us witness the continuous action. By its generative matrix, she does not stop at a particular climax, but embraces the narrative and the dynamic space of its calligraphic variants, and as all those who abandon their expressive fantasy, she has not submitted her painting to limited objectives. Being seduced by the flexibility of the calligraphic work and the expressive and evocative power of the Arabic letters, allowing herself going to the pleasure of varying the figures, to generally drawing an attractive scene devoid of decorative, luxurious, surreal or completely abstractive elements. Therefore, her texts are neither advertising nor purely aesthetic. She has rather a brush that reflects the heart's impulses and the language of the spirit at once. During her long artistic trip, she has not abandoned her links with the heritage of infinite symbols and multiple familiar and realistic objects. She has rather not stopped returning to it its specific features and objectives in a semiotic balance with fashionable modernist practices. Stubbornly continuing the realization of her art project, she has accumulated there varieties and additions. In this sense, she has made her work a creative space where she has re-examined the alphabet, observed the changes, giving thus to its creation , poetry and magic that are inseparable from the tumultuous and cracked reality.*[(13)]

In one of his articles, Mohsen Thahbi notes that Madiha Omar made this statement about herself and the Arabic letter:

Madiha Omar: Honor Award from the University Maria Gray (London, 1933), studies at George Washington University (1943) and the University of the Arts Corcoran (1959), exposes her first work inspired from the Arabic script (1949) in the periodic fair of the Corcoran Museum in Washington: "abstract Images from Arabic letters." Then she held an exhibition of her paintings at the exhibition " Riwak ", in Baghdad (1971), where she exhibited some of her calligraphic works dating from 1946.

Is she the first Arabic calligrapher, or Jamil Hamoudi (born in 1924) Is the pioneer in this field, as he says himself, according to the story that is made about him by Shakir Hassan Al Said, in his book " al- bood al- wahed " (the unique dimension)? Since 1947, Jamil Hamoudi had used the written word as a new element of the pictorial structure of his works. But Madiha Omar states that she is the first to consciously and deliberately think and theorize the relationships of art with the Arabic letters . Indeed, in Washington, in 1949, she issued a statement under the title of *Al- Khat al- Arabi* , *onsor istilhèm fi al-fann* (Arabic script, element of inspiration in art). She studied there the possibility to draw on the malleable features of the Arabic alphabet and use its abstract values in modern painting. So, she has surpassed all painters and critics in this area.(14)

To give an idea of his art, I looked at most of her work in my corpus, five in total. She demonstrated a personal aesthetic and vision for changing the composition of letters, focusing research on their particular power and the links between them. Letters are here particles of a microscopic world and steeping in the nebula of the canvas, similar to human sperm seeking meetings. Her relationship with heritage is obviously the basis of its possible modernists choices, such as this inclination to surrealism, due to her attendance of the European arts.

As in the paintings by Jamil Hamoudi, these are a second step in the evolution of the calligraphic aesthetics beyond its religious referentiality. Focused on the theme of urbanity, they represent modern buildings, under a new architecture, and their abstractive structure denotes a contemporary atmosphere. Letters configure grounds on surfaces all occupied, lose their religious character in favor of a contemporary, social and economic dimension. The painter makes us renounce any other reading except that which considers the painting as an epiphany of modern life. He takes the same direction as Madiha Omar, but with a more modernist technique which allow him to be compared with world famous artists such as Picasso, Juan Miro, and especially Kandinsky whose painting is steeped in existing urban atmospheres. This urban characteristic of the canvases of Jamil Hamoudi may be explained his study abroad experience.

In the same context, the artist draws our attention by choosing his calligraphic

configurations of popular theme, as the mosque as part of the city and not at the religious structure of the canvas. He creates abstract syntheses where diverse colors draw moons, while the bottom of the painting is occupied by the calligraphic motifs. Much energy completely withdraws religion and mysticism, and makes the canvas a soft and very malleable calligraphic mass.

In one of his paintings, Hamoudi exacerbates the abstraction of letters to the point that it is the colors that embody the overall composition . In another one, he is content with a structure based on two or only a few letters to realize configurations with erotic connotation. Again with another one, he drives the abstraction of letters to the point of reducing them a ground on which he creates aesthetic figures of surreal obedience, where appears, for example a detail (hair) of Salvador Dali. The open experience of Jamil Hamoudi contributes to exile calligraphy from its original environment and makes from it a cognitive power and a suitable material to a pictorial experience, that is permeable to the themes of the city, of life and of the experiences of other artists.

The works of Shakir Hassan Al- Said (this painter appears in all stages of our study) embody a calligraphy imbued with mysticism and spirituality. They do not oblige the recipient to a conservative reading, because they are compelling to the look through their full surface with white, red and truncated lines that draw fantasies and gaping wounds in a wall. He thus treats the impact of calligraphy, but by restricting it historical to the techniques and atmospheres of the modern painting.

In a canvas of Dhia Azzawi, we see the accumulation of the entangled letters, lying on the ground as if they bent under the weight of time, and dominated by the red color which connotes a kind of fire. He reduced them to ashes, from which a visual configuration emerges whose are big. This lyrical drama is unique to this painter who has often taught us that it is most able to mix methods to extract from them one particular method to him.

Three tables Wided Ouerfelli brew letters, moons, popular heritage, ancient tales and spirituality. This atmosphere is the most common to calligraphers, but with this painter, it is associated with modernist themes, which, far from ancient wakes, draw a beautiful contemporary Iraqi work. The history of Iraq is set there with moons, this constant theme specific to Jawad Salim, purple domes there evoke to them the succession of the Islamic eras, the Tigris, the water element, and the eastern house recall here a common theme in several ancient and modern Iraqi works. We thus see that Wided Ouerfelli traces her own identity path, where she combines miniatures, female specific activities, spirituality and heritage.

I can say that this assembly has seemed sharp to me only in his works. This means that the spiritual dimension is nothing to do with religion here. It is rather a component of the Iraqi identity embodied also by calligraphy, nature and space. It is quitely separated

from the religious conservatism, transgresses the traditional heritage and reinvents them using modern methods without being completely uprooted from what secretly holds it to the history of the Eastern spiritual heritage.

Regarding Rafa Nasri, there was a performance of his own. The graphics of all his paintings, or almost, made him this artist of the accumulative practices, crystallized in a ceaseless experimentation. We discussed here is a kind of mythology of popular customs, saturated with a sensitive spirit to the legend and the common heritage. The painter recalls this ancient triangle and draw visions about the interference between the popular heritage and the development of our roles. Note that the ancient triangular structure predominates in all represented grounds, as if it meant accumulations of popular items stored in the ground, with forms of monochrome marabout tombs, covered with names of God and triangles.

They are closed masses waiting their secrets to be probed. Amidst the plain color that predominates in the religious objects such as talismans and folk sculptures, he recalls the stories of holy characters like prophets and angels, putting their words and letters in amulets forming a common heritage. Rafa Nasri does not really get rid of the spiritual, mythical and religious hegemony, but he substitutes to it the real popular in its traditional and rigorous context. So, he opted for a calligraphy that transgresses the origins and the basic functions. We see in the composition and the reorientation of letters, uncompletion in sentences and ideas, that he is obsessed with the power of the letter itself, rather than the power of the religious spirituality, despite the several heavens that are compounded and graduated on the surface of the paintings.

However, we note again that there are secret links that connect the work to the ancient spiritual heritage, and that letters evolve in a movement from the inside to the outside, suggesting a mythical concept of presence / absence. It is evidenced by all these objects of sacred connotation, such as talismans and amulets representing otherness.

XIII

Calligraphy and limited modernity

I preserved here two paintings by Paul Klee, the pioneer of calligraphy in modern art, in order to get an idea on the breakthrough of this evolving aesthetic processes and ancient contents towards contemporary practices. This artist is considered as a master by many calligraphers in the Arab world such as Shakir Hassan Al Said, Nja Mahdaoui, Jamil Hamoudi and others. His method is to make calligraphy a way of drawing and not to highlight of the beauty and the expressive power of letters. This is why Arabic calligraphy is based on a vision that differs from that of calligraphy of other artists in

the world. The first is derived from its ancient roots from which it is still nourishing , while the second has finally established an independent style of religious referent and associated with expressionism and symbolism

Therefore, this latter is perfectly matched to modernity and the new forms in the developing world. Details, curves, gaps, variations, and movements are configured in such a way that they form parts of the city and men living in progress. Modern calligraphy has thus been dissociated from the alphabetical nature of the letters, so that to make generally from them plunged signs into the real world in order to support the development and undergoes the changes. It accommodates a contiguity of the evolution of spirituality and technical progress, which continues for three centuries.

In contrast, Arabic calligraphy separates the two. Spirituality there remains congenital, even when it refers to the styles and modern methods. The religious environment determines progress, so that they only change the shapes and sizes of letters on the surface of the canvas, but always without breaking completely with the spiritual matrix. We would like to reverse the process and allow the letters to be more released from their religious roots. We would get modern calligraphic works, where spirituality and art are also present and cohabit, rather than simply remain contiguous, except for the experiments of Madiha Omar, Jamil Hamoudi, Shakir Hassan Al-Said and Nja Mahdaoui.

In general, we can say that the evolution of calligraphy in the West and its regression in the East can be summarized in the following five key points:
1- The evolution of the city and that of the economic, cultural and intellectual relations in the world impose their rules to the cultural and artistic production. In Arab countries, the city has undergone a real qualitative change (nature of relationships in the urban context, composition, architecture). But it remained mired in the oriental and ancient traditions and customs. In addition, the underdevelopment knows also a different pattern of progress in the developed countries. Indeed, in the 1970s, only Beirut hosted the modernity and adopted it as a development process, while the other Arab cities have imposed their own traditions to the same modernity. This has promoted the spread of calligraphy, but under the control of conservative powers going in line with the politic movements and holding in their hands the Arab culture. We are now witnessing a large regression of the artistic styles, despite the evolution and the renewal of the sources of our culture, in comparison with the great leap forward of the 70s, in the visual arts, inter alia.

2 - The Arabic calligraphy closes on itself and turns its back on modern experiences. Previously, students went to the West to learn and interact with the other. Today, those who travel in Europe, for example, they do so as politicians who expose their particular works. The Arabic exhibitions have not created any new power in the European artistic field, but they are best known of the various works whose reception is unfavorable. We

need a new design principle of influence in order to situate our art in the field of world art; also we need another definition of the authentic identity and specificity. It is not enough to have modern cities, cultural projects, art festivals and museums, but we still need a new methodology that reserves to our culture and our art a special presence in the national concerts. We will build also complementary relationships with each other, which will replace all the little contributing hierarchy and exploitation relations.

3-Any form of art that remains moored on the sources themselves that are exposed to changes cannot know a true methodological progress, if it does not revolt against the conventional methods and does not renew itself from the inside, as calligraphy worldwide did. It is now a full-fledged art, sufficiently cut from the spiritual roots, thanks to the creativity it has discovered in itself, and does probably not agree with any particular religion.

The Arabic calligraphy is currently offering some works that are seeking autonomy. We must therefore consider this art regardless of any religious background to keep it away from the earlier traditional interpretations. Getting rid of its religious bark is part of its right to freedom, to empowerment and to a different existence in its environment. We regret that it is still partially limited and in an imbalance situation between the temptation of abstract art and the mid- conservative as well as mid- modernist aesthetic. This second option which explains the survival of ancient paintings of Ottoman, Persian and Arabic calligraphers. In their context, they were considered as modern works, since their creators concentrate all their aesthetic efforts on the structure of the letter itself, that is considered as a location and essential instrument of calligraphy. Today, we notice that there is a double movement:

The first concerns the processing of the dimensions and the shapes of letters as well as the work on the truncated letters. The second combines the letters with other grounds that are present on the surface of the canvas, which is already quite transgressive from the ancient calligraphic standards. But this movement is nevertheless still under the influence of the ancient conservatism. The result is that the Arabic calligraphy remains in exile situation in the space of modernity.

The proof is that we previously looked at the calligraphic canvas in order to read the letters and not to contemplate them at first as an aesthetic object. Reading was conditioned by a particular presumptive knowledge, as a part of an educational conservative and cognitive power. Our appreciative or pejorative judgment of the work was based on its adequacy or inadequacy of its design and its preconceived plastic aesthetics, and only in the context of the consistency of letters in a single braid. In addition, we wondered about the type of writing (*kufic, rokâ, nasskhi, maghribi* or other), otherwise in the affinities with the method of a particular calligrapher and in his quality of ongoing invention.

Today, we take a contemplative posture in front of the calligraphic painting, interested in the pictorial space in which we interpret the possibilities and the components. The thematic reading is, however lately presented because of two factors. The first is due to the abstractive revolution attempted by some bold and skilled calligraphers who have adopted new figures of letters.

It is an evolution that occurred due to the economic modernity, to urban explosion accompanied by technical and decorative inventions in housing and architecture in general, which involves a functional change of calligraphy. It is no longer confined to its religious dimension and it has found its place in the public space. It has adapted to a new changing climate and to a new less predictable and more whimsical look. It opted for a larger ground and used the most visible means with practical techniques that gave it the proper materiality to a far vision and to the acquired dimensions of the new space. Such a revolution gave it a power of adaptation to new changes in society. It is sufficient here to ponder the power of the illuminated advertising in the space of the modern city.

The second factor is the intervention of the computer and other new technological means, which has transformed the particular aesthetic possibilities of the letter. They make it acquire a new easy value to circulate, to be graphically captured and used, which has popularized the understanding and usage. The computer revolution has weakened the presence of traditional calligraphic canvas which has imprisoned it in earlier contexts, where the means and aesthetic goals are essentially spiritualistic and preservatives.

4-The fourth point concerns the taste of the recipient. We previously referred to it and we will return to it for its decisive role in the evolution of opinion and criticism. The individual vision cannot produce a worthy critical method. We need a collective approach based on cognitive principles to understand the calligraphic canvas. More than the admiration of a particular successful implementation or a particular study of a precise creation, we expect an aesthetic awareness of the ground in the context of educational and cultural programs. Because the calligraphic art cannot be renewed and get out of the sphere of the usual recipients without being a mass art .

5-The fifth point is to release the calligraphic canvas from the conditioned modernity in order to make it a phenomenon and a visual mass which is legible according to an instant view. We must deliver it from the past to integrate it to the current aesthetic movement. We must apply a renewable vision depending on the situation and the visual target of the moment. We cannot access the calligraphic canvas to its independence if we do not take into account the following four principles:

First, we must refrain from sticking on the calligraphic work dialectical concepts such as background / shape or conscious / ephemeral. Such ideological approaches might suit any painting or any other work, such as forced and unambiguous passages.

Then, we must stop psychoanalyze the work of calligrapher, according to the Freudian grid. The concepts of manifest, latent and repression are reducing a priori, limited to the biography of the artist and to the Islamic cultural environment.

Then, it will be necessary to exclude the existentialist approach which is focused on topics such as authenticity, inauthenticity, heroism, tragedy, uprooting and rooting.

Finally, we should also abandon such linguistic concepts like the signifier and the signified, or form and content because they have already been deconstructed by postmodernism.(16)

Notes:

(1) Salah , Ridha , " al Loughatou fan attachkili fi al- karn al- ichrine " Magazine : Alam Al- Fikr , No. 2 , Vol. 26 , October / December 1997.

(2) Adonis , Arrouyatou al- Fannia bayna ayn al- jissm wa ayn al- qalb , vol. Al -Fann al- Arabi al- mouâssir , Al -Alam al- Arabi , Paris , p. 21 . S.D.

(3) Toni Martini, " al- Ishamatou jamalia al- arabia fi nachât al- fann al- Arabi al- hadith " , p.58 .

(4) Ibid. p. 59

(5) Ibid, p. 60

(6) Extracted from an anonymous electronic site.

(7) Adonis, op. cit. p. 39 .

(8) Ibid, p. 35 .

(9) Ibid.

(10) Toni Martini, op. cit. , p. 55.

(11) Conservatism and deconstruction (destruction) are, in our opinion, philosophical concepts that determine the Arab-Islamic philosophy whose certain aspects have been applied in literature.

(12) Adel Kamal, " Madiha Omar tastakssi molghazat al- Hourouf wa mokhrajatiha athabita " 21-3-2006 .

(13) Ibid.

(14) Mohsen Thahbi , " Al- houroufioun al -arab , arryada wa al- houiya " October 1, 2007 , electronic journal : Adab wa fann .

(15) Jeannette Woolf, Ilm al- jamalia wa ilml ijtimâ al - Fann , trans. by Marie Thérèse Abd Al- Masih and Khaled Hassan, p. 59 . Al- majliss al-âla li - athakafa , No. 228 , Al- Machrou al- li Kawmi attarjamla , 2000.

(16) Many concepts such as those we have mentioned above are especially the subject of the postmodernist analysis of capitalism . Several other postmodernists concepts related to art are discussed in the work of Frédéric Jamsson , trans. By Ahmed Ihssen .

Part 8

Calligraphy and the exploitation of the spiritual reserves of the art form

Aesthetics of the abstract value in Islamic painting and its impact on contemporary painting. *Prof. Nadeem Chaudhari*

Eastern civilization has clearly reached its peak, as well as it had the leading role in the artistic creation, even before the Western civilization. Eastern peoples are pioneers in the fields of art, literature, science and statutory laws. Similarly, the oldest monotheistic religions emerged among them and so that the revelation of Islam took place, through the voice of an Arab prophet, in favor of the Koran in Arabic. It is in this East that the Arabic culture has spread, in parallel with the propagation of Islam. An Islamic empire emerged in the Middle Ages and its expansion has covered a wide range of Saudi arabia, Andalusia, China, the center of Europe and Africa. All these parts of the world were interconnected with each other thanks toArabic: the language of religion, administration, science and poetry.

The structure of the Arab personality that characterized the East after the emergence of Islam, is inseparable from the spatio-temporal framework, from traditions and cultures. The history of civilizations in this region reminds us that it has been the cradle of ancient peoples since the mists of time, whether in Iraq, Egypt, Persia, China or India. These people have translated by artistic means, their knowledge and customs, completely borrowed from the Islamic thought, which gave an overall intellectual unity shared by all. Thus, an Arabic character was formed, particularly in relation to the artistic aspects. So, the unity of the Islamic art finds its explanation in these ancient roots.

It is not just a simple decorative aesthetic, but an expression of the absolute, also a pulse of life and nature. This art was prosperous at all times and throughout all the Islamic world. The artist was touched by the desire to restore the essential things through transcending the hypothetical reality; so, the abstraction has been consistent in all his works, WHICH MADE him say to Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi in *Al-Imtaa wa al-mouânassa*:

The image of God descending from intuition, then concretized by the painter's hand, embodies figurative hypotheses and highlight the skill of the designer.

The Islamic thought

It reveals the eternal essence through the annihilation the sensitive dimensions of man and nature, in order to intuitively come through the visible and the reality. The Arab-Muslim artist, whether in front of his canvas, or in front of a mural, is less concerned with accuracy and mimicry than the projection of his own intuition, in order to achieve an idea, a symbol, a permanent essence, in the abstract value of the Islamic art, such as the case in arabesque. Indeed, this form is one of the artistic specificities of the Arab Muslim. Its figures transcend the sensitive and suggest various models composed of geometric elements, or of drawn letters in a thousand ways; linears, vegetal, animal and humans. they devote feelings like iteration, insistence, the future, continuity and infinity.

The composition within the Islamic art

It manifests itself in the ordering of the elements and clearly shows the analytical vision of art in Islam. These elements involved in the development of the work are geometric patterns, Arabic letters and human and animal figures. They are used as the basis of this art, either concomitantly or separately. The geometric motifs cover the walls of buildings and domes in the shape of bands derived from each other, and where the circle is an essential figure. It ceates original drawings, obtained by the intersection of lines and curves. The circle is the basis from which came out all motifs that are subsequently represented on ceramics, wood, glass and marble, in addition to books and fabrics.

Until the 8th and 9th centuries, these compositions were made without any calculation. Then, the Arab- Islamic world witnessed the diffusion of science, such as music, mathematics, astronomy, natural science, medicine, philosophy and translation of literary texts. There has also been new discoveries, such as the number *zero* and the decimal fractions, which were developed by scientists such as Al -Kindi, al- Farabi, Avicenna, Averroes, translated into Latin and transferred through them, to the West.

Throughout the Arab-Islamic world, art has been able to better design and implement geometrically the circle as the common base for all areas, including writing, architecture, poetry and music.

Compositional and organizational elements of values

In the Islamic art, geometric figures are among the most important. They have a particular personality unmatched in other civilizations. Until the 8th century AD, they were often basic figures to cover large surfaces of buildings and domes, and took the form of continuous and endless bands, geometric derivations, which are supposed to make the idea of the divine unity.

The Arab- Islamic artist is working on it on the plastic transformations obtained

from the intersections of straight and curved lines that leave regular voids between them, thereafter stuffed by the use of some patterns. These diffused lines intersect also other units, according to an iterative and generative rhythm where angles and geometric designs are combined. Thus, the continuous circles, the braids, the broken and interspersed lines, triangles, squares, hexagons, octagons, and star shapes provide a set configurations composed of an abstract aesthetic effect.

Variably used to fill margins and gaps, these figures have an impact on the recipient to the extent of their variation and its contemplation of God. Despite the apparent complexity of this composition, it is actually quite simple, since it is based on constant processes , which consists of dividing the circle into several areas , the formation of a centralized diffusion and linking them to other shapes like the square, the triangle , the stars ... There is therefore no wonder that the circle would be the basic figure from which the Muslim artist extracts all his geometric elements and invests them in various compositions , performed on the ceramic, wood , marble and glass.

As I said earlier, until the 8th century BC , the Islamic art has made such compositions without any use of calculation, but using methods adapted to the needs , such as folding a line into equal segments , to obtain certain measures , or use a stake as an axis which is attached to a shortened or lengthened line, depending on the circle to draw . This method was more effective that inventing geometric units , before the discovery of the zero and the decimal fractions. The circle was therefore a basic unit rooted in the emotions of the artist who made possible the invention derivatives without the use of complex mathematical operations. The division of the circle into equal subsets, attached to its axis, for example, remained in use even after the discovery of the zero, the decimal fractions and the Arabic numerals (1 to 9).

Arabic Letters and Calligraphy: Fundamental Elements of Islamic Arts

Since the dawn of Islam, the Arabic writing has received an extraordinary interest due to its status as the language of Quran, which facilitated its spread in parallel with the expansion of the religion. Ernest Conel, in his book "*The Art of Calligraphy"*, claims that:

The Arabic writing has spread through the language in the Islamic world linking, despite all boarders, all the Muslim nations.

As of the dynasty, the Arabic alphabet has been in use in other languages like Persian, Turkish, Hindi as well as Arabic itself. The Arabic letters have also been welcomed in Persia, Turkey and Andalusia, as they did in Arabia. The "Hejazi" type of writing has been introduced in Iraq with the Islamic conquest, in both of its styles, the "dry" and the "soft". In al-Koufa, the "dry" style has been privileged. It was subject to

some improvements and a number of additions that resulted in the creation of the "Kufic" type of writing. As for the "soft" style, it only received interest later on, under the rule of the Caliph "Al-Maamun", that is in the era of the great Arabic renaissance which knew a vast trend of translating new books and scholarly works. Ibn Khaldoun has written in this concern, in his "*Muqqadima*":

There has been a great deal of distancing, between the "Baghdadi" and "Kufic" types of writing, that they became very much different. Later on, this difference has worsened, at other times, due to art itself and to the inventiveness of master calligraphers.

Towards the end of the 9th century, writing has known a swift progress which resulted in the emergence of six dedicated types among a multitude of other styles that were subject to rules and had a rigorous technique adopted by the best calligraphers as being poetic and as a guide. These styles were named: "Al-Aklam Assitah" (the six quills) and are: "Naskh", "Muhaqqaq", "Thuluth", "Tawqi", "Rayhani" and "Riqa". As the Swiss scholar Flori noted in his comprehensive survey on the *Islamic Art*:

No art has used writing in profane and sacred architecture, as well as in all which is visible, as the Islamic Art did.

Thus, the Arabic writing has been a common denominator for all the arts. Muslims have used it with all its forms, in all its styles and in accordance with all the expressions suitable to be used on raw materials, such as ceramics, wood, metals and fabrics. Nowadays, there are urgent tendencies to achieve a modern renovation in calligraphic art. In my case, being a contemporary artist, I opted for a particular orientation. I envision this art as a set of practices that make up an endlessly extending continuum. The various forms of writing, whether mural or engraved on marbles and domes, converge into a rhythmical, harmonious and continuous beauty. Empty spaces along with spaces filled with letters, words and phrases reflect, altogether, the same echo and the same value.

In this way, the influence of the general calligraphic space, with all the applied shapes, predominates the whole attention of the spectator. In other words, this influence is of both filled and empty spaces, whatever means are used to create them (colors or metal, wood and stone engravings). This is why, in my conception and execution of the calligraphic work,all models and norms are the same. They all melt together in a general setting, in favor of a precise objective, even when the Islamic heritage is always present.

We've been able to observe that the presence of human elements and plants is very limited in the Islamic art, unlike geometric elements, which are obviously predominant. As for me, I could only draw, from the previously mentioned, but few pictures of plants, achieved by ancient calligraphers and miniaturists. I did the same with Arabic calligraphy in general, in which the harmony between relief and empty spaces is suitable to my work.

Generally, I can say that the pictorial sources are in particular the designs that fill the spaces with various geometric configurations, like those of ordinary buildings, mosques, domes, collars, mihrabes, “muchrabiahs”, garments, mysticism... I’m inspired from all these sources to elaborate a contemporary research project to produce plastic arts based on an analytical apprehension of the heritage, without any allegiance to the rigorous techniques of one source or another. My position, therefore, consists of a personalized use of the spiritual which we have inherited and which is still vivid in the memory of the contemporary man.

Motion in the Islamic art

To be able to understand the concept of motion in Islamic art, it is necessary to define the word, to pinpoint the focal role of men, with all their experiences and apprehension of things, and to remind of the artist’s attachment to life itself, which made him reserve a big role for motion.

We need first to understand that the importance of motion stems from its focal role for the eye, when we are dealing with conceiving things. And in order to measure the dimension of things, we have to lay eyes upon them. On the other side, the basic principal in our perception of the world is in fact a coherent composition of many vivid images. We see with our eyes and perceive with our minds. They are both aware of our nature and our psychology, and their importance is obvious for satisfying the need for balance and motion in conceiving things, as Robert Guillaume Scott points it out in his book: “*The Foundations of Perception*”.

The artistic work has to be the result of a particular methodological activity. It is all about organizing the necessary elements of motion, which determines the temporality of the work and makes it somewhat alive. This implies that the form is a result of a creative skill which is at first inanimate, but afterwards, it embodies itself in temporality, melting in the realm of spatiality. The artist summons the elements of rhythm, order and proportionality to create a certain unit where homogenous and heterogeneous elements merge together. Thus, he is able to provide the chosen form with a specific, temporal and lively rhythm, in which, procedures like iteration, echo and symmetry intervene as being aesthetic aspects that highlight rhythm, variety and temporality.

The Muslim artist has been perceived this way for a very long time. He hence created strips for geometric units that are organized according to repetition, symmetry and redundancy, in order to highlight rhythm and formal diversity. In reality, we find that the soft relief gives meaning to the hard relief, which is, by itself, a form of motion. Equally, the formal difference is considered to be a variety in which the given forms contribute to empty spaces and to the similarity between represented patterns. As for

the absolute variation, it stems from the total difference between a chosen design and an entire system of relationships.

Therefore, the artistic work needs a system that incorporates all the elements of creation. This is exactly what the Islamic art embodies with the use of all materials and all geometric methods; such is the case of the arabesque that fills empty spaces.

On the other hand, rhythm is considered the fundamental principal of the artistic work. This is why we repeatedly hear the word *rhythm* when talking about forms, writing and colors, especially in plastic arts. The regular symmetry is a form of iteration that involves the parts of the work and the structures that suggest an iterative motion, in other words, a rhythmical repetition.

The second important element, after rhythm, in plastic arts is time. The relationship between the two is quite continuous, as the first, alone, cannot explain the emotional impact of the form. At most, it can only explain the effects that we should give to form itself. And as this is impossible outside a temporal framework, it is obvious that the latter determines the rhythmical and dynamic aspects. We cannot continue to ignore nature's symmetry, precisely in the image of crystals. These are the most perfect natural forms that depend on the system of iteration, which determines the value of aesthetic forms.

Certain components of Islamic art link calligraphic illustrations with big dimensions letters and meticulous arabesques, which provoke an entanglement of both designs to create, as a result, an impression of motion. The balance also allows distinguishing motion and stasis.

Motion in Islamic art is clearer in the "soft" type of writing used in arabesques than in the styles in which dimensions and plant and animal elements are graduated. There is a contrast between straight lines and angles, and a junction of patterns, in angles, in wood carving. Similarly, there is a contrast between colors, in their contiguity and mixing, with the geometric units like mosaics and the composition of ceramics, in various dimensions and different shades.

Beyond all these relative details of the concept of *motion* and to its meaning in relation with plastic elements, we have to mention that it acquired an emotional and mystical significance, practically in all the domains of Islamic art. I'm constantly inspired in my experience, in relation with the echo of the continuation of this dimension in contemporary art.

Color in Islamic Art

The Arab-Muslim artist knew how to exploit all materials and all colors to expand his range. He therefore exploited all the shades (whether compound or raw), by varying

the dimensions, to make it melt in the laying shadows over the surface of the canvas. Thus, he succeeds in creating an aesthetic value, rhyming with the symmetry and the chromatic commutations, using the geometric or "soft" types of writing.

Colors have been used with renewable and proportionate means to every expressive scope, renouncing to the use of graduated values conducive to the contemporary art's logic. They are of a unified density, determined by natural values, which explains the absence of the third dimension. Hence, we see that the compositions, motion and color constitute the basics of painting in general and are gateways between contemporary art and Islamic art, making it a precious cultural heritage.

In this concern, glass painting has provided us with a good illustration. Light and color mingle together and bestow upon the painted shapes new meanings and a great deal of power. In this respect, Cézanne says:

Painting records the feelings in the perception of colors. Everything else must be sacrificed for this end in order to ordain these feelings.

He adds:

When the color is rich, the form draws thereof its strength and authenticity.

The Arab-Muslim artist has always been in communion with the world's essence, by painting, and not only by using colors. He is not satisfied by just applying real images, he has surrendered to the third dimension and the aerial perspective in his chromatic technique. However, color was not devoid from a psychological or philosophical denotation. On the contrary, it gave it qualities, values and effects. Yellow is the color of the blazing sun and the desert. It condenses the fiction and fantasy of the Arabs, and evokes equally the diurnal life and the struggle for survival. Blue is the color of the sky. It invokes love, the sacred and purity, and it is transparent and ethereal, shady like mercy, encompassing as providence. It is the celestial color of serenity, worship and praying. As for green, it is the color of blessed earth, with grace and satisfaction. It is the color of water, air and the tree of life.

In many cases, color restores equally both light and shadow. As it is basically used as it is, but, in relinquishing to bright gradation, it could also give full account to clarity, apart from masses and dimensions distributed on the empty spaces of the canvas. As for the shadows, there exist salient elements among the components of the canvas. They win by not being very much noticed for a better coherence with the light that emanates from windows. Windows have an aesthetic and a utilitarian functions, depending on what time of day it is and whether we are inside or outside the mosque.

Thus, we see that the Arab-Muslim artist has implemented color, with specific

means, proportionate to the objectives and convictions taken into consideration. He gave in to the graduate values of the technique of contemporary art, in favor of straight and precise values, which has a unified density of the whole painted surface.

The principal of divine uniqueness and its relation with abstraction

Among the factors that influenced form and color, we evidently find divine uniqueness. God is absolute, unique and necessary. The universe is his work. Uniqueness and universality join together. Man is an element in the universe, however, he holds deep inside of him a sense of universal absolute as nature itself. He has no value compared to universe, only to the extent where he returns to the essence. God being the essence, the Islamic art is founded on the intuition that leads to the absolute being.

The Arab-Muslim artist has not given any importance to delicate things, because they do not exceed the material limits of the work, and dedicated all his attention to the essential and absolute. He wasn't a painter in the figurative and the occidental meaning of the term. The occidental artist has tried, as far as he is concerned, to give a full account of the absolute, in the framework of new schools such as the school of abstract art, in accordance with Cruce's philosophical thesis, which considers art as a delicate knowledge. Similarly, Brion, the writer of *The Abstract Art*, has compared the new phenomenon of the contemporary occidental art, with the Arab-Islamic art, and asserted the influence of the latter on the first.

Thus, has the Arab-Muslim artist searched to merge entirely in his subject, and to neutralize nature to join the spirit of the universe? The arabesques prove it well, as they are a part of a fundamentally mystical and positive art, an art typically Arabic, which has radiated towards occidental arts, including the contemporary era. It is also an art founded on the principal of continuous transformation. The Arabic writing, considered as a fully-fledged art which has been used as a composition element in the arabesque, uses very often separated or confused letters, while they were implemented as basic elements or canvas objects. This is due to the fact that the Arabs, precisely under the reign of Islam, has given to all the letters particular signification as well as a corresponding image.

The arabesque art has been of great influence over the other Arabic arts, such as tapestry, books ornamentation, mosques and palaces (in both interior and exterior). It used all sorts of materials to create works of high abstract value where its effects are stretched to reach our contemporary arts, including Arabic and Egyptian arts.

Thus, we realize that the abstract value of the Islamic arts that continued to generously inspire contemporary arts, in which the heritage of our ancient civilization was used. We agree, of course, by virtue of "inspiration", not on transposition and imitation, but on the

adaptation of a vision of the abstract beauty (for both foundation and form), endowed with fascinating craftsmanship. It evolves according to a contemporary concept carrying this sincerity, in which color, decoration of pictures, motion, harmony between elements and a comprehensive and moving approach, all compete together.

Part Nine

Calligraphy and the recovery of the forgotten memory

Calligraphy and resuscitation of the Arabic memory. *Ali Fawzi*

Essential Preliminary

The intermittent resuscitation of the Arabic memory, either directly, or precisely in the investigation on the value of both the letter and the Arabic script, is part of a civilization vision which seems to be a great necessity. What is needed are international circumstances that determine our relatively local culture where calligraphy is the subject of a real celebration. It is an ancient and unique heritage, since no script has been so celebrated as a spiritual artefact, to the unparalleled impact on humanity as a sign of authenticity and rootedness, or as a potential of expressivity, not to mention aesthetic effects, too, have strengthened the special status of this writing.

Some historians explain the genesis of the Arabic calligraphy by three exclusive hypotheses. The first is that God taught Adam all the languages and revealed him writing, so Adam made all the scriptures that we know today. The Arabic script has developed by the Prophet Ismail (Blessed be He), after the flood of the days of Noah (peace be upon him), when each nation received its own book.

The second most likely hypothesis derives the Arabic script from the hymaritic one, also known as The script of the South, which reached the Levant Countries due to trade journeys of The Winter and of The Summer.

As for the third hypothesis, it explains the genesis of the Arabic calligraphy by the evolution of the Nabatean script. Arabesques discoveries in the Oum Al'Jimel region, east of the Jordan, and which dates back to 650 BC.BC make this hypothesis plausible. Other arabesques are found in the region Haoran's, more precisely on The Tomb of Arab Poet Imrou'l Qays. Arabesques transited then Haoran of Al-Anbar, then to Doumet El-Jandel and Hijaz.

Also, my research on calligraphy and resuscitation of the Arab memory will be based on six key points:

1-The writing, heritage which roots the visual arts:

The history of writing has evolved in several stages to the point where it gained authenticity, rootedness, heritage and civilizational fundament. It was consecrated as an ancient artifact serving several human civilizations and filled with diverse and numerous functions, such as cognitive notations, documentary, artistic and decorative. These functions have helped establish the visual importance of the overall artistic structure in many fields of artistic creation either in the Pharaonic civilization or civilization in Mesopotamia, or in the civilizations of the Far East such as China, Japan and others. As demonstrated by the varied architectural roofing, different tombstones forms as well as many arts and practical crafts, like jewellery, ceramics and many others, in the areas of utility and, occasionally, woven structures.

Indeed, so many rare archaeological pieces were discovered by many civilizations, such as these important Chinese objects whose production dates back to the 18th century BC. BC These are some rooms decorated with scriptures similar to hieroglyphics. So many other examples and so various are provided to us by the ancient Egyptian civilization. As regards of the Mesopotamian civilization, known as cuneiform writing acquired an aesthetic dimension that has fascinated historians and visual art lovers for centuries, in addition to a primordial function in the establishment of knowledge.

On this problematic of the aesthetic effects of writing in the field of art, Mahmoud Abdel-Ati says

Ancient civilizations, including Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Far East have used writing in two ways: a map of transcription and conceptualization and another figurative and aesthetic inseparable from the artistic work. After these civilizations, the aesthetic use narrowed the exception of certain manuscripts of the Middle Ages in Europe.

This use has remained marginal in the Renaissance arts and in the European arts in subsequent periods, but it has acquired a singular interest in the new art of the late 19th century, as compositional elements of figurative works this historical period. With the Islamic Civilization, the Arabic script became a unique aesthetic in fact in a qualitative and quantitative point of view.

2-Problematic of the quest for Arab aesthetic identity

By the turn of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the problem of seeking a plastic Arabic identity was a nagging imperative in the field of visual arts, where we tried to create a balance between our ancient heritage and contemporary reality. Therefore, this issue has become a general obsession that sparked emotion in many Arab artists too little impressed by everything that is imported from Europe or quite insensitive to the

supremacy of this model. Several approaches have emerged in the data processing of the issue that concerned the various horizons creators.

The focus was on the visual arts that most felt like the best way to develop a genuine and specific plastic Arabic identity. It should also remain pure, free from additives and European ornaments, imposed by some art teachers sent to Europe for ad hoc training. We must not forget that European culture predominated absolutely in the evolution of the Arab world. The Arab letter and the writing, enjoying a high aesthetic status in the field of visual memory of the Arab and Muslim, a strong expressive and aesthetic potential, went to be authentic, inexhaustible source, thanks to direct contact with the life of the Arab people and their aesthetic and functional needs. As a result, some had the strong conviction that the Arabic letter and writing were the solution to the puzzle that was the realization of an identity, especially after successive failures incurred in trying to achieve this in an effective and meaningful way, thanks to modern visual art. Furthermore, the expressive capabilities, aesthetic and plastic potential associated with the Arabic letter as an ancient heritage form, have helped to overcome the repeated failures of the project relating to the construction of an identity, and awareness of many artists to draw on these resources in their creative activities. The sphere of work inspired patrimony then became very large. Styles, visual ways and various techniques have spread from the Atlantic to the Arabian Gulf.

3-Disputes between calligraphers and artists

There has been a spiral of disputes between calligraphers and artists because of the matter of inspiration and obstinacy calligraphers. These were too serious modification or extrapolation formal and thematic of the Arab letter, compared to conventional standards. They remained committed to the idea that artists are unable to conceive aesthetic values, real, Arabic calligraphy. They saw all these temptations as signs of a simple creative crisis, or a way to resist the temptation of ease, especially when they have found the artificiality of many imported ideas, their inadequacy with our society and the drying up of several sources of creation. Calligraphic Artists themselves have persisted in their position against such reactionary and frustrating attitudes. Some have even considered them as indicative of underdevelopment and unconsciousness about the value of new and contemporary visual concepts. They believed that the creative approach of the potentials and the aesthetics of the Arabic letter as heritage form, spiritual, ancient are essential. For them, this is the only way to root the Arab artistic creation and achieve a kind of originality and plastic distinction, likely to create parity with the other arts, given the heritage and cultural achievements of our ancient Arab and Islamic civilizations. There was a dilemma pending between approvers and opponents who haven’t succeeded to

find any solution, despite an invasive European contemporary visual production, ready to take our visual culture and establish its artistic hegemony. It threatened to do entrench the principle of allegiance neutralize inventiveness, confiscate the positive role of the recipient and impose a consumer policy, centered on the imported product.

4-Forefront and calligraphic inspiration:

Many forefront artists have realized how important the issue of identity is. Thus, recklessly, they had their best interest to be inspired from the letter and the word written as structural elements of the artistic, modern work. Their attempts were numerous and diverse in most Arab countries.

The historical memory of the Arabic plastic art abounds with authors such artistic experiences names, who have tapped seriously in Arabic writing, as Iraqi Madiha Omar, which is considered the first Arab artist who created a scientific study about the relationship between art and the Arabic letter. This study was published in Washington in 1949 under the title "The Arab calligraphy, inspiration element for art."

From the perspective of this work, this artist has participated in numerous group and solo exhibitions, including the annual exhibition of Corcoran, Washington (1949) and her solo exhibition in Baghdad (1951).

Hamed Abdallah, an Egyptian artist born in 1917, was among the first to work on the aesthetics of the word written on the canvas. The word appeared there in perfect match with the general spirit of the work. Expressions were quite complementary to other elements of visual creation. He was responding to the issue of inspiration drawn from Arabic calligraphy, after his exile in Denmark. The Arab taste marking his style was then one of the important factors that have attracted the attention of the foreign spectator to his paintings.

The same path has been followed by many artists including the famous Lebanese artist Wajih Nahla, one of the most famous, who put the capacity of the Arabic letter in the service of visual work, transforming the written words in pure formal abstractions, irrelevant to the content of the letters and enunciation of the words.

As for the Iraqi Jamel Hamoudi (born in1924), who is considered as one of the pioneers and among the best in the work on the aesthetics of the Arabic letter. He began to transcribe the legible word by preserving all its qualities and formal and thematic possibilities, then devoted himself to the principle of abstraction, pressed to adapt to processes in vogue, and reduced the written word in few illegible letters, pure abstract aesthetic forms.

In turn, the Egyptian Hamed Nada (born in1924) incorporated the written word in

his works, giving them a personal popular aspect, marked by simplicity and spontaneity. This process has been a central and sometimes unique composition of his paintings element. Some historians believe that, in this perspective, the Testing of Youssef Sidon preceded those of the Egyptian Hamed Abdallah and Iraqi Shakir Hassan Al-Said, one of the founders of calligraphy.

In favor of such serious integration of the aesthetic values of the written word into the structure of the canvas, Syrian artist Mahmoud Hamed Ali strived to transform the word read in a visual, enigmatic and unreadable expression, because it is more interested in the form and within the meaning of the statement, giving rise to relatively early productions.

The Egyptian Sami Rafa (born in 1931) is specialized, meanwhile, in the decorative arts, and when he approached calligraphy, he chose a decorative approach that has incorporated in many works. The most important was the colossal work of the memorial of the martyrs of Six October erected in the city of Nasser, under the name "Pyramid of October." This pyramid was decorated with letters and Arabic scripts designed in the style of the time.

Considering the artist Shakir Hassan Al-Saïd as mentor of gathered group on the principle of "unique dimension", developed in Iraq. This artist has his own philosophy of the importance of the Arabic letter in artistic creation. Indeed, he thinks that the Arabic letters are actually likely to play a key role and be an alternative to all the figurative elements of optical art.

Regarding the Egyptian artist Ahmed Fouad Salim, (born 1936), we note that the practice of the Arabic script has varied between readable transcription in the design of the operation of the aesthetic relationship between white and black, to create special visual styles. It is not limited to declaratory and functional aspect of the letters, and special sincere dynamically generated by the struggle between form and content, on the surface of the canvas feeling. His works are notable for plastic expressiveness full of human feeling and philosophical significance.

As for the Tunisian Nja Mahdaoui, note that the words in his works grant an aesthetic extension and a particular visual taste. His work is designed to bring out the genius loci.

We also say that the creations of the Moroccan Farid Belkahia are equally important in the field of calligraphy, and the list is too long for this short presentation, because it will include the Lebanese Salwa Shoukair, the Sudanese pioneer Shirin Ahmed and Brahim Solhi and Adham Ismail, both having made a personal aesthetic dimension to the issue in question, in modern plastic production. We do not say less of the Tunisian Néjib Belkhodja the Moroccan Mohamed Mouilhi, the Palestinian Kamal Balata, Syrians Abdel Kader Arnaout and Marwan Kassab, Youssef Ahmed Qataris and Ali Hassan, of the

Egyptians Kamal Sarraj, Mohsen Khadhraoui Omar Najdi, Jebali Hussein Abdel Wahab Morsi and others, the Saudi Moussa Mohamed Salim, of Jordan, Princess Ouejdene Ali.

There are also many foreign artists and Orientalists who were contemporaries of each other, in the Arab world, who perceived the importance of aesthetic values of the Arabic letter and have exploited in their work. We include Henry Mathieu, who practiced Arabic calligraphy in 1937, during his stay in the Arab Maghreb.

In the field of sculpture, we must remember the Egyptian Sajini Jamal and Iraqi Mohamed Ali Hekmat. As for the ceramic art, the list is also well loaded.

5 - Are Arabs the pioneers of calligraphy?

In modern times, the Arabs are not the first to devote the aesthetics of writing as a source of artistic creation. Since Latin letters have appeared in the work of artists such as the Cubists, Futurists, Dadaists and the structuralists.

The historical memory of the global art is thereby responsible for the many names of famous artists who have put writing in the service of visual text, using some letters, and sometimes clippings as the synthesis process generally applied using the technique of bonding: Picasso, Braque, and Marenti Schwenzer. The precocious work of international artist Paul Klee, meanwhile, was decorated with certain signs and certain graphic allusions, which seem to the viewer to be a synthesis of some of the visible things that the artist has made by simple geometric representations, quite close to a few letters.

Moreover, writing has appeared in the work of French André Masson, Marc Tobye and Sonderburg. They were serious tests, kinds of matrices subsequent visual creations that formed an artistic movement in Paris in 1946, whose objectives and creed were published in the journal: Calligraphic Dictatorship. Whereupon several exhibitions followed, devoting the method and passing, step by step, to wrest public recognition in the context of the European Plastic Movement.

An independent wing was reserved for calligraphic work at the Biennale de Paris in 1965, and at the National Museum of Modern Art in Paris in 1968. Then, the echoes of this movement reached other European countries and the United States and elsewhere. The efforts of calligraphers continued, due to the dissemination of ideas and artistic visions in independent publications, or on the margins of their exhibitions. Isidore Isou is considered in this regard, as the main theoretician of this movement.

There is also Georges Mathieu, a French calligrapher, born in 1921, who generated a great outcry in 1956 when he had the audacity to expose to the public theater Sarah Bernhardt, a Latin calligraphic fresco, twelve meters long and four meters wide.

6-Calligraphy and the group of the "Unique dimension"

The Arabic letter endures with its achievements in aesthetic qualities, due to words, expressions and visual statements, abstract, occupying the surface of the canvas of many artists fascinated by the formal beauty, and more driven to exploit the potential of this visual rare pearl. Calligraphy began to develop and conquer the field of Arab creation in favor of various individual efforts here and there. Then, these efforts have crystallized into a widespread phenomenon everywhere, after having been organized in a general framework, by a group of excellent experienced and mature Arab Iraqi artists. They adopted the founding principle: take advantage of the visual nature of the relationship between the surface of the modern work of art and aesthetics of abstract Arabic letter whose richness brings complete satisfaction to the civilizational requirements expected by contemporary visual culture.

These artists have also held a joint exhibition where they presented their ideas, designs and orientations, studying at the same time everything that concerns the problematic of ambiguous calligraphic aesthetics and the nature of the artistic work. In 1971, in Baghdad, they were given the name "Group of the unique dimension", composed of Shakir Hassan Al Said, Jamil Hamoudi, Abderrahmen Kilani, Mohamed Ghani Hikmet, Dhia Azzawi and Rafa Nasser.

The group released a general manifest where we connote:

Thus, we, as a group of artists who have helped to integrate the letter to our works, we feel obliged to organize an art exhibition and literature under the name "Exhibition of the unique dimension" and, as a slogan: "the art is inspired by the letter "from a purely aesthetic point of view, thereby enhancing this important artistic element as root authentic, meaningful of the soul of our civilization and its philosophy, with the most radiant aspects.

Initially, this phenomenon was welcomed with some caution, even greater suspicion and negative attitudes, but without outspoken criticism statement in respect of the movement that I feel personally as too little studied as it should, so meticulous, analytical and neutral. Some were hastened to denigrate and put on the account of bankruptcy, a mere authenticity pretext of heritage and otherwise mime the West, who preceded us in the aesthetic exploitation of the letter and written words. Others have insisted on the need to let this movement grow, because the critical readiness that considers an ideal and unique solution currently to sit Arabic plastic identity would be a serious mistake for his supporters.

Despite everything that has been said above, the methods of this movement are common in many areas such as painting, photography, graphic arts, design and sculpture and ceramics.

And parallel to the diversification of these generated visual designs by the concerned phenomenon, many new calligraphic artists held to gather in their work several different artistic mediums and advanced modernist techniques, on the surface of a single work.

Letters and words are invested with a contemporary spirit that strives to abstract the letter to get rid of its meanings and its enunciation content. The focus there is on the attention given to the new plastic beauty, in order to achieve some sort of balance between authenticity and contemporariness, to adapt to the constraints of time and, let us say timidly, hoping to embody the identity.

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Tenth Part

Islamic architecture and history

Conservation issues of Islamic Architectural Heritage

Mohammed Said Al-Belouchi

The Islamic architectural art is a feature of our cultural heritage, which stretches over a long period from the 7th to 19th C., and affects a large area extending from China to Spain.

This art reflects one aspect of Islamic civilization and the extent of responsiveness of the arts of civilization which contacted or which were contemporary to it: Sassanid, Roman, Byzantine, Indian and others. Seen in the use of plaster, building domes and pillars in various capitals in the restoration of buildings of previous civilizations according to the needs, work wall coverings and exploitation of nature in the gardens and fountains, domains where Muslims of Andalusia have excelled.

The architectural art is one aspect of human progress which we are proud, because it represents one of the foundations of our heritage and our civilization, and reflects the evolution of Islamic societies throughout history. Our Arab-Islamic architectural heritage is a great and diverse heritage. Successive generations have built accordingly to religious motivations and political, social and legal systems introduced by Islam. Naturally local and particular circumstances of each natural region have also had an impact on the type of architecture and its components.

The interest we pay to the Islamic architecture will allow us to establish links of continuity between the past and authenticity on the one hand, and the present and technology on the other. Because it is necessary to reconcile the constant values and contemporariness, so do not be diverted from our authentic heritage by the new directions of progress. It is necessary today to make the best use of this heritage, for it is not a burden on our progress.

There are some factors that influenced Islamic architecture, so that it becomes impossible to assert that there is an Indian or Turkish Arabic Persian tendency. Princes and rulers of those times played indeed a key role in this area. Religious faith also had a great

influence on the overall architectural evolution. We can summarize the circumstances and influential factors that have left their traces in Islamic architecture:

- Islamic conquest of the developed countries in the east and to the west, the expansion of the Islamic empire, from India to Andalusia, and their impact on Muslims;
- Religious motivations and legal, political and social systems, brought by Islam;
- The appearance of the first architectural model in Syria, where the Umayyads established their dynasties and are inspired by the Byzantine architecture (the Umayyad Mosque, the Anjar Palace);
- The Ahmed Ibn Tulun era and architectural styles during his reign (Ahmed Ibn Tulun Mosque);
- Loans made in the arts of conquered nations by Islam and Islamisation instead of the conservation of their local characteristics.

A primordial question: why conserving the Islamic architectural heritage?

As for the Gothic, baroque architecture... Islamic architecture is an integral part of the human heritage in general, expresses the Islamic identity and represents one aspect of this world heritage with which it maintains relations of exchange. This is what generates creative richness and fruitful diversity. And the conservation of this part of the world heritage-Islamic architecture-is no longer the sole responsibility of the Islamic countries, but that of the entire humanity. It does not only contribute to the sustainability of testimonial features of the past and ancient times, but the orientation of the progress of human civilization in general.

This heritage reflects the identity of human civilization in the temporal dimension (past, present and future). And with the continuous exposure of our architectural heritage on deculturation -which is a great risk-, heritage conservation became an essential objective among the priorities of the Islamic countries. They must protect it and preserve it through a common instance, if not global.

2- The Issue of conservation of the Islamic Architectural Heritage:

Attempts to conserve the Islamic heritage are not easy to face contemporary civil needs and their status on the scale of priorities of each political system. It is plausible precisely when calculating the economic and social cost of the project in comparison with other development projects in the Arab and Islamic countries, such as health, infrastructure, education, and housing. Therefore, managers are faced with many questions, for example:

- Which is more important: conserving the Islamic architectural heritage or promoting a better housing?

- Should we conserve this heritage or develop it?

In this case where the need for modernization is in contradiction with that of heritage conservation, the interest is rather given to the requirements of this to the great displeasure of the latter. Thus questions arise: what should we conserve and how?

3-Elements of Islamic heritage conservation

These elements are defined in terms of the amount, type, form and the importance of heritage we are supposed to preserve. We can suggest a typology of these elements as follows:

- Keep samples of Islamic architecture in museums, after restoring it (El-Hira Palace, Museum of Damascus);

- Keep patrimonial spaces that are unique and homogeneous architectural complexes (the cities of Cairo, Damascus, Rabat, Istanbul);

- Keep " patrimonial bridges " in the case of a passageway between two spaces (Bastakia neighborhoods, Al-Darb al-Ahmar, Khan Al-Khalili);

- Keep a set of buildings that represent a coherent architectural model to highlight their heritage (the Umayyad Mosque, the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Ayasofya, Taj Mahal).

4-Means and styles of the Islamic heritage conservation

Styles and means implemented to preserve the Islamic patrimony vary from country to country in the Arab-Islamic world, according to the re-using needs. They include:

- Restoration: this is to restore the patrimonial buildings to reinstate its original characteristics;

- Reanimation: this interested patrimonial spaces where activities and new or ancient services are introduced , but reset in good condition, in order to provide a dynamic, develop them socially and economically and adapt them to the requisites of modernity;

- The re-use: we re-exploit a building in its original functions or new functions according to the following criteria: 1 / the building is likely to be developed? 2 / its development present an economic interest and will it be re-used?

5-Recommendations and Proposals:

Islamic architectural patrimony is exposed to the influence of changes occurring over history. Given this fact, it will be needed to ensure adequate protection and keep it for future generations. Here are some recommendations in this regard:

- Enact laws, systems and ad hoc legislation, updating the International Commission of the Islamic patrimony;
- Establish a center of Islamic architectural patrimony conservation in the Arab and Islamic countries, under the supervision of the Ministries of Culture and Arab organizations such as the Arab Towns Organization, ALECSO and ISESCO;
- Create a suitable system for the conservation of the architectural patrimony, which does not suffer from interpretations and includes administrative provisions value of laws in the Ministries of Culture of Islamic countries;
- Eliminating pollution sources of the environment that affects buildings in patrimonial spaces;
- Leverage information to raise awareness to audiences on the value of patrimony and the importance of its conversation, promote such awareness among the public, starting with teaching methods in schools;
- Study the social conditions in areas where there are archaeological sites, identify nuisance factors and find human solutions appropriate for the conditions of treatment, due to the strong direct influence of these conditions on these sites.

Conclusion

Islamic architecture has always been a faithful mirror of the civilization of the Muslim people and their evolution. It has accompanied it by naturally evolving, without departing from its private seal. Because in addition to the physical presence under the species of construction materials, styles and diverse architectural means, there is an artistic sensibility embodied in the decorative motifs (architectural and vegetal), calligraphy exploited instead of images and statues in the Islamic architecture.

Thus, we find that the responsibility for the conservation of the Islamic architectural patrimony in the Arab-Islamic world, its reanimation and its transfer to posterity obligations in priority to all Islamic countries and in the framework of an international body.

As part of the global architectural patrimony, the Islamic architectural patrimony needs a contest of efforts to preserve, develop the best means and mechanisms of cooperation with a network of people involved and interested in the issue. Thus contribute to the financial, technical and artistic support necessary for its preservation and exploitation, without undermining its value and authenticity.

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Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

A miniature from a manuscript of Maqamat Al-Hariri. Painted by Al Wassiti
In 634 AH / 1237 AD



Fig. 5
A landscape of Persian poetry manuscripts



Fig. 6

A miniature of Shahnameh manuscript of Ferdowsi - Turkish school dated 1545



Fig. 7

A miniature from Indian Mughal school about 1570 AD



Fig. 8

Houyam and Homayon in a garden. Herat, 1440 Ad, represents a wonderful festival. All the elements of nature in this scene seem happily feasting; mountains, rivers, earth, animals, birds, high-level plants, trees, skies, stars and moon. Arabesque and writing themselves are represented in a fine soft way, as if they were part of the fine linen plants and flowers. The technical implementation of the miniature suggests that the components were released from its earthly shackles. Even the style of costumes, woven with an eastern poetic sense, seems to be part of this gentle fabric. The place seems to surpass its materialistic nature to turn into a dream in the Garden of Eden.



Fig. 9

A scene of a Persian miniature. The scene shows how the artist used the oblique lines and surfaces to suggest a spatial depth. The artist created the landscapes into a new world by aligning the obliquely elements, as the oblique lines are able to eliminate the boundaries of the area. These recreated spaces give the viewer an impression of a «moving landscape», so he can intervene in the work positively and choose the viewing angle from which he would resume his work: up or down, right or left, the matter that gives a sense of sweeping scope through the sense of spatial gradient. The Japanese point of view also appears in this work of art , it illustrates the elements from above and transversely. Muslim artists have adopted this value that goes along with their trends in handling surfaces that suggest the depth concept away of the Western trend which uses a scientific geometric perspective.

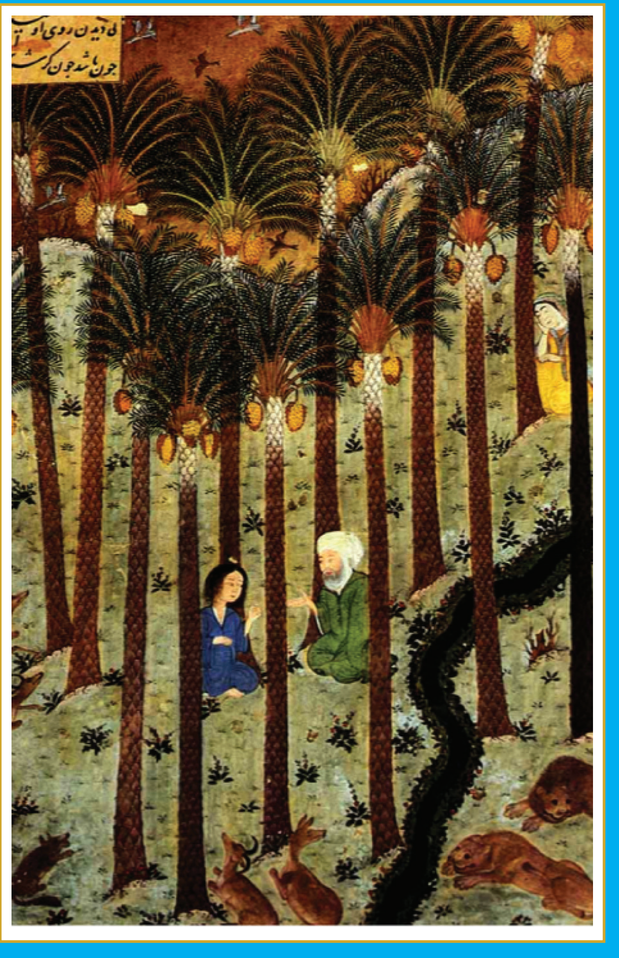


Fig. 10

People in an oasis from Nizami’s manuscript (Shiras 1476 Ad). The miniature shows vertical sectioning technique in space illustration. The sectioning is achieved in this case by palm trees positioned in various places in front of the miniature and in the backgrounds; the height or the size does not diminish when going into the depth of the canvas. The palms are aligned to hold, between their trunks, an area of land that takes the form of gentle slopes on which plants are distributed fortuitously but at a steady pace.

The branches of the palm trees are concentrated at the top giving a vivid space of palm leaves, airily painted so that to reveal gently the bright areas while crossing by. In the middle, there sit two main characters, while a third is at the left in the background, distinguished by wearing a joyful yellow colored coat. This color is repeatedly used with a clear imaging sensitivity on the hanging fruits.

Also there is a group of animals, shown to be docile, in the front of the Miniature, turning their heads up and directing their eyes to the center of the scene. Dark water stream running up from the bottom on the right side confirms the high angle of view in the reproduction of space. The artist’s intellect is manifested in choosing to reproduce one tree to the right, colored with black, to prevent eye flight out of the scene when looking following the stream.

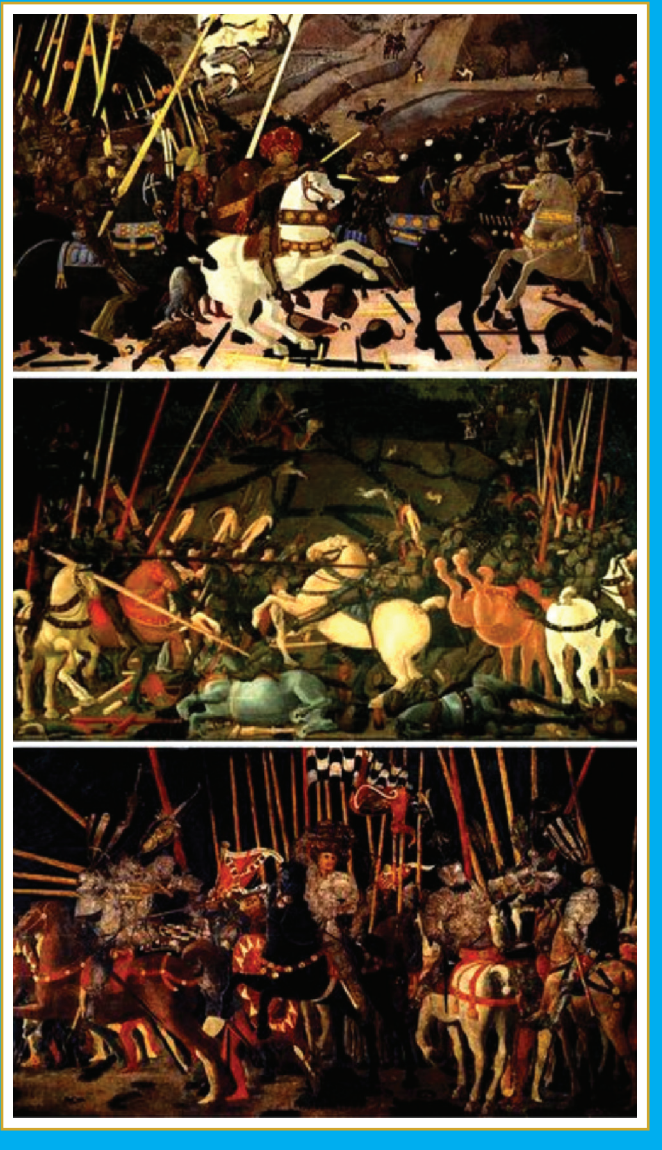


Fig. 11
Uccello's Battle of San Romano (1457 AD)

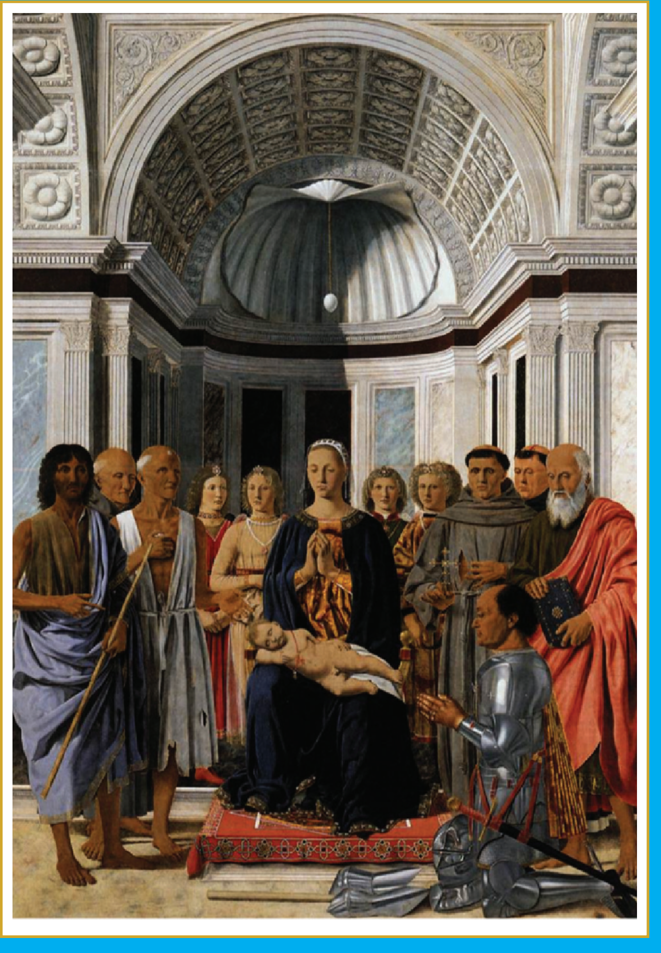


Fig. 12

Piero della Francesca: Virgin and Pearl (1472 AD)

This panel clearly shows that the artist's attention is focused on the reproduction of the three-dimensional space. Because there is no original story about the Virgin with a pearl in the old traditions , nor in any other panel of the same kind, this proves the concern of the artist. The pearl is reproduced in an oval shape and the Virgin stands in the niche. It appears that the main concern of the artist is not the religious fact itself, but to paint an oval shape on an elliptical section, that is to say, to deal with perspective towards outcropping.



Fig. 13

Jan Van Eyck, the Mystic Lamb (dated 1432).

This panel clearly shows the Flanders style in representing landscape by organizing forms in groups at different distances in an imaginary space.



Fig. 14

Pieter Bruegel, Hunters in the Snow (winter and Hunters return) (dated 1565).

This painting presents a spacious landscape minutely subdivided into smaller sections, farms, fields, trails, ponds, , groups of trees , all covered with snow ,as well as close and far figures. The picture is divided into two parts almost crossed by an oblique axial line dividing the work into two triangles , and separating the surface where hunters stand and the other surface which falls sharply to depths of wide extents and elements of different sizes.

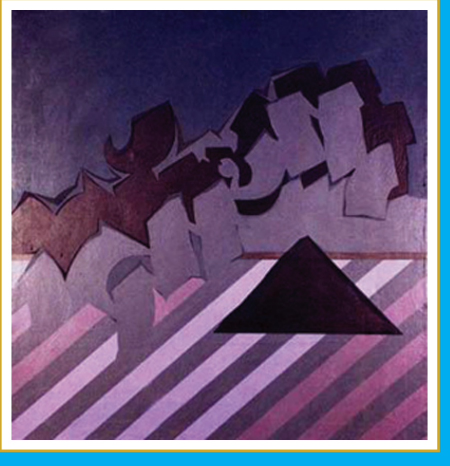


Fig. 15
Portrayal, Mahmoud Abdullah ,Egypt

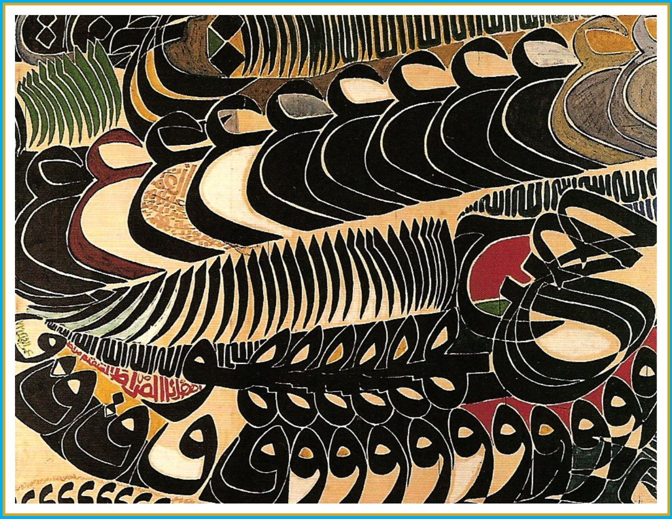


Fig. 16
Portrayal, Omar Najdi



Fig. 17
Portrayal, Ahmed Mustapha Egypt

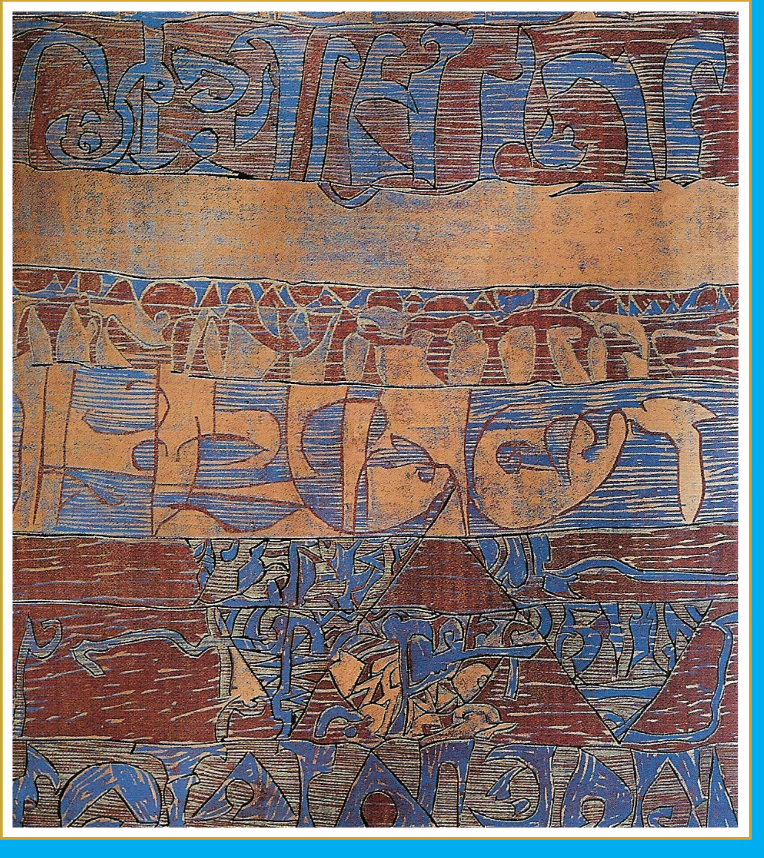


Fig. 18
Engraved wood, Hussain Jebali, Egypt

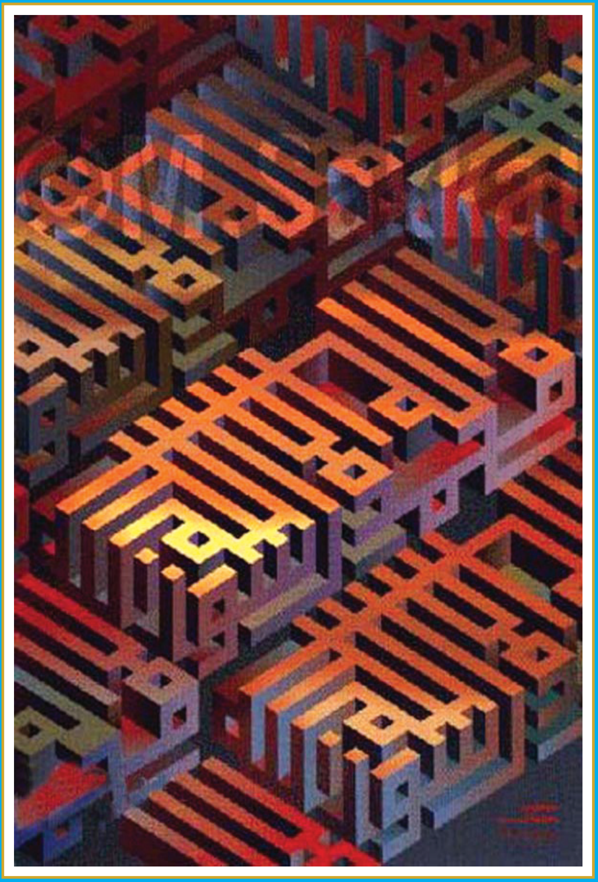


Fig. 19



Fig. 20

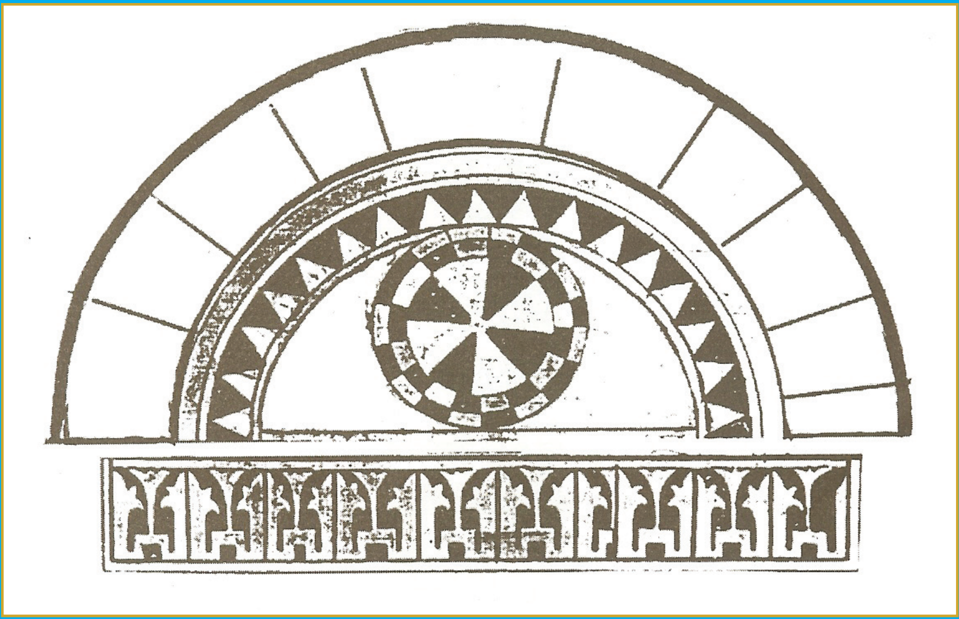


Fig. 21

Decorative elements and Kufic calligraphy imitation on the door of ‘Peter” Church in the city of Rennes , France

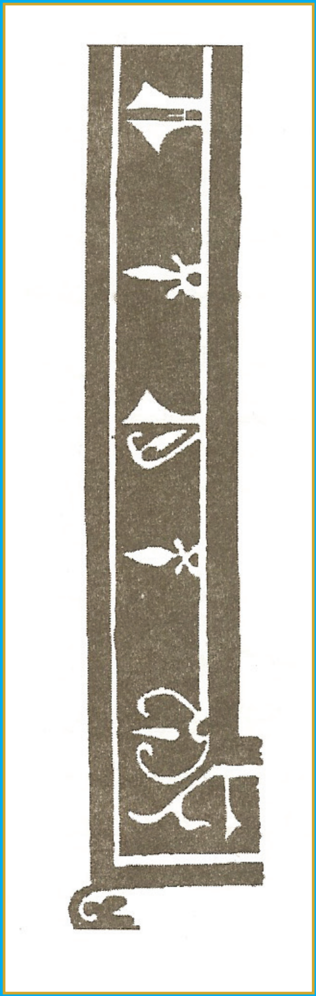


Fig. 22
«The kingdom belongs to Allah» in Arabic Kufic script on the cathedral door , from Lyon,

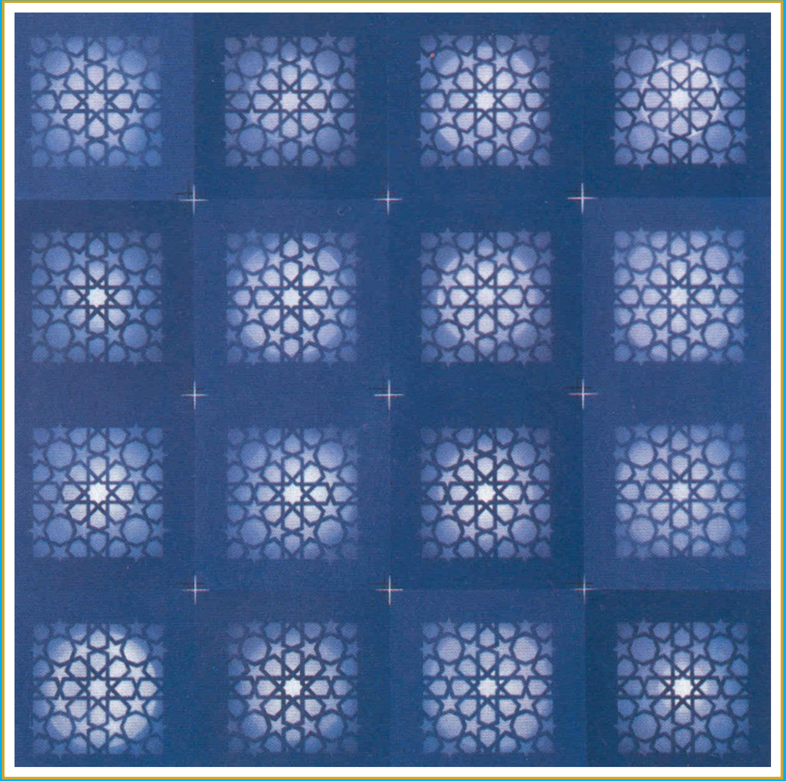


Fig. 23

Lotfi Aarnaout.
Ondulation Oil painting on Wood. 109 X 109 cm (1984AD)

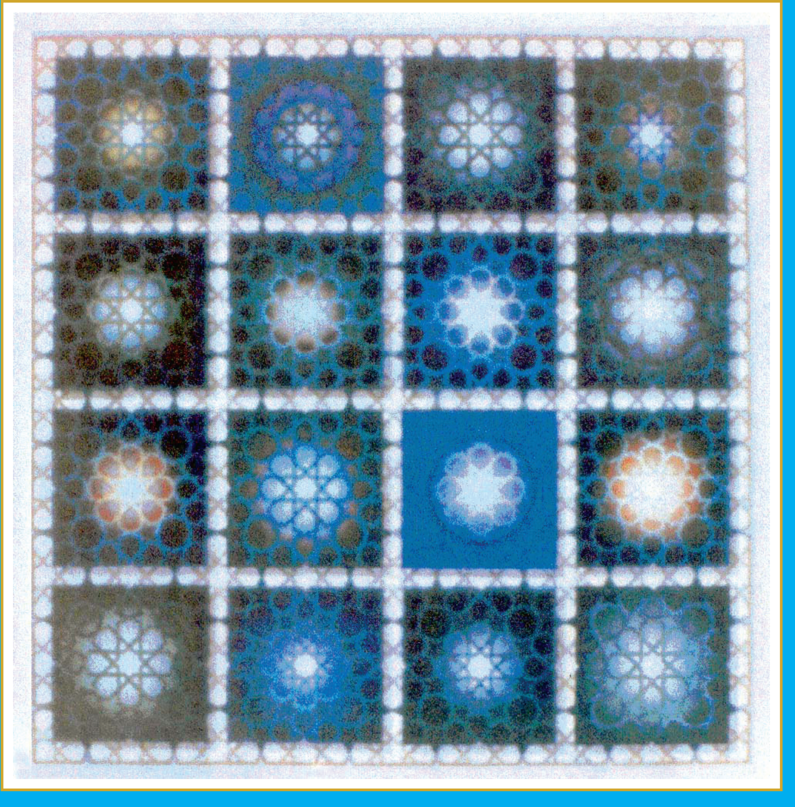


Fig. 24
Lotfi Larnaout.
Untitled. Oil painting on canvas. 100 x 100 cm (1981 AD)

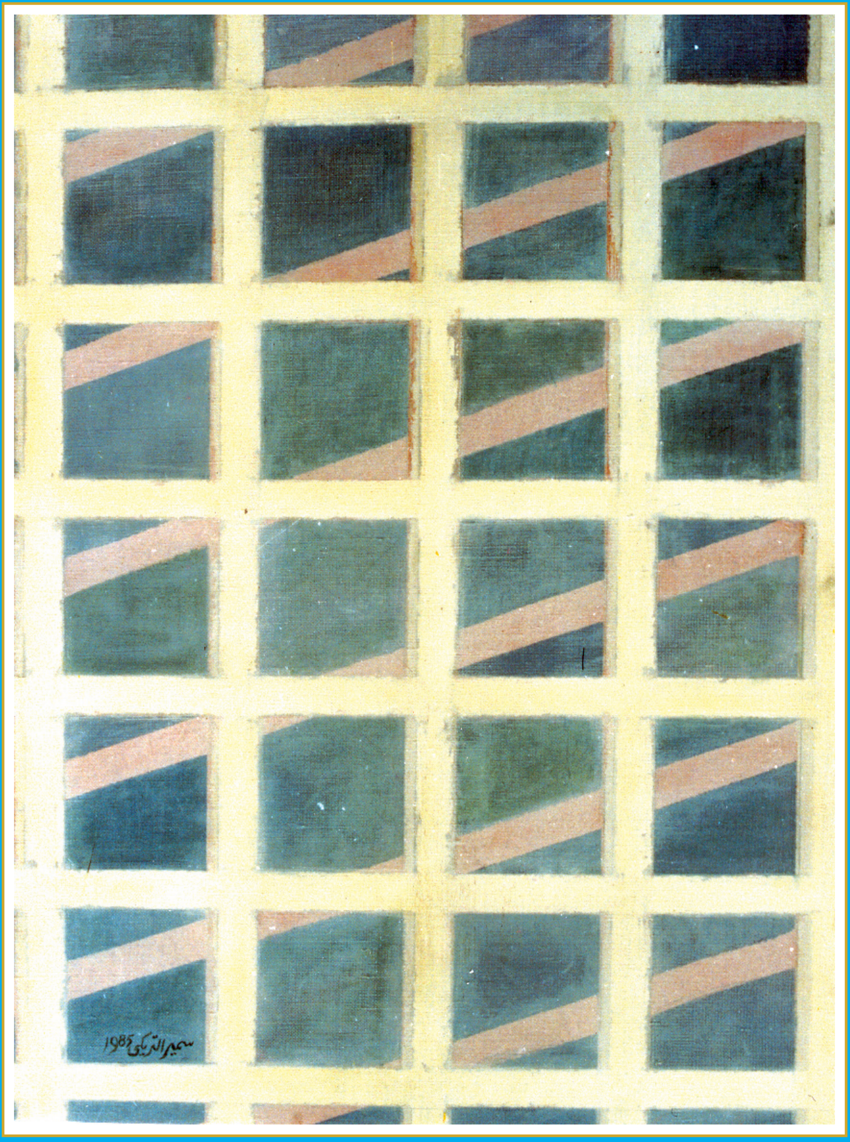


Fig. 25
Samir Tribi
Polygon. Oil painting on canvas. 73 x 54 cm. (1985)



Fig. 26
Samir Triki
Oil painting on canvas. 73 x 54 cm. (1981)

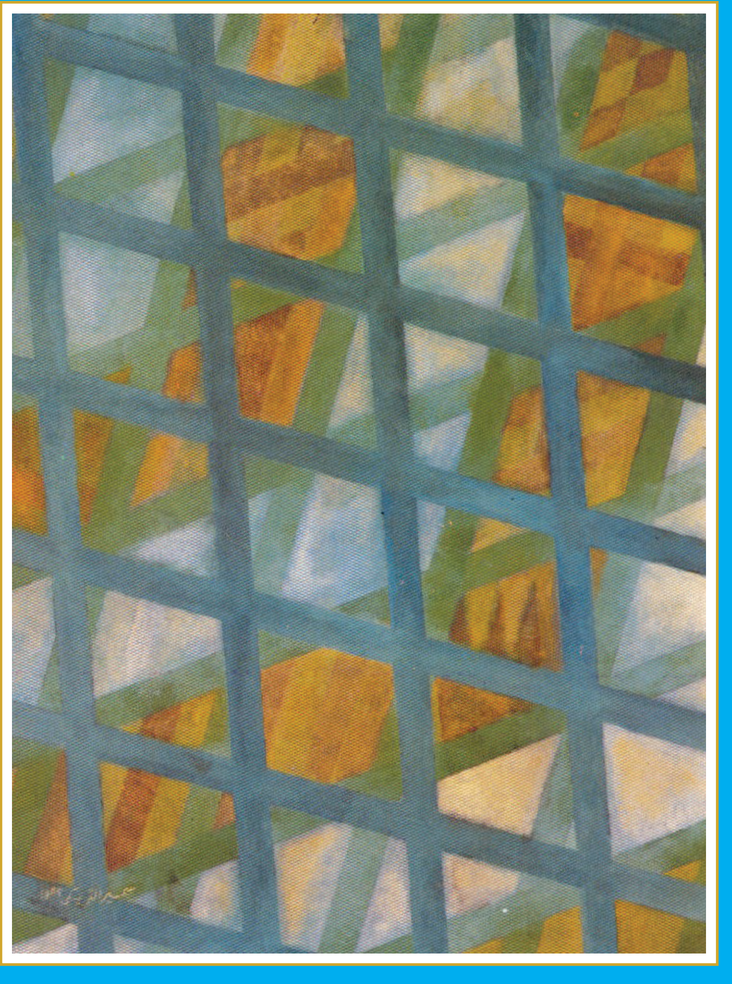


Fig. 27

Samir Triki

Oil painting on canvas. 73 x 54 cm. (1981)

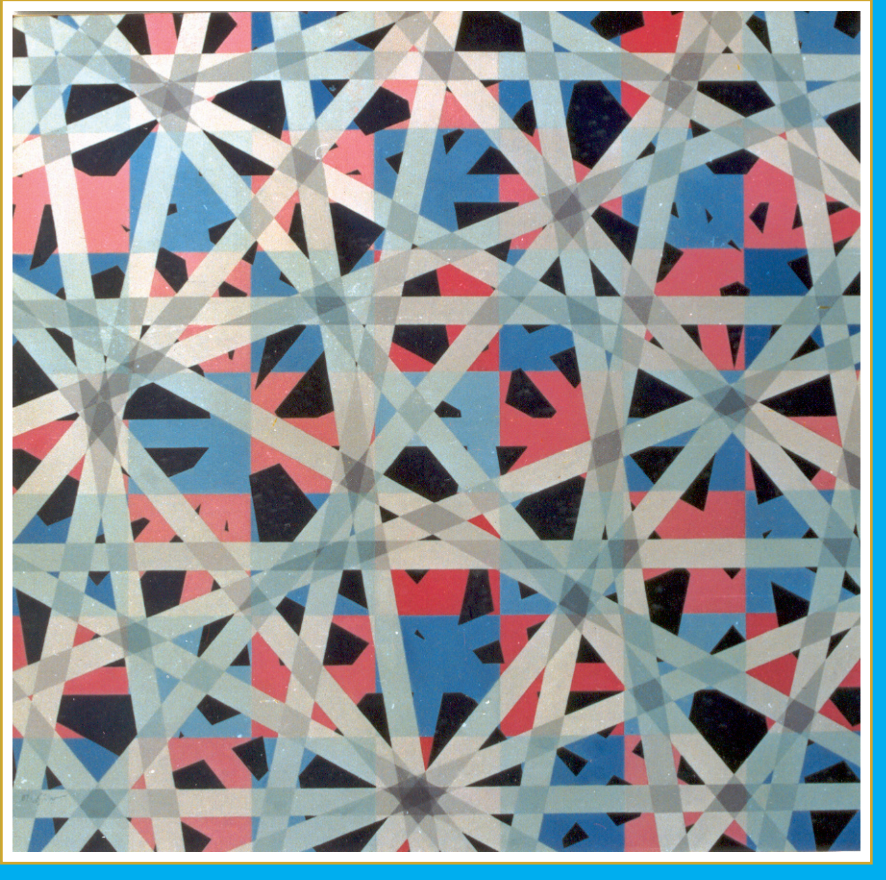


Fig. 28

Samir Triki

Mobile Square. Oil painting on canvas. 100 x 100 cm. (1989)

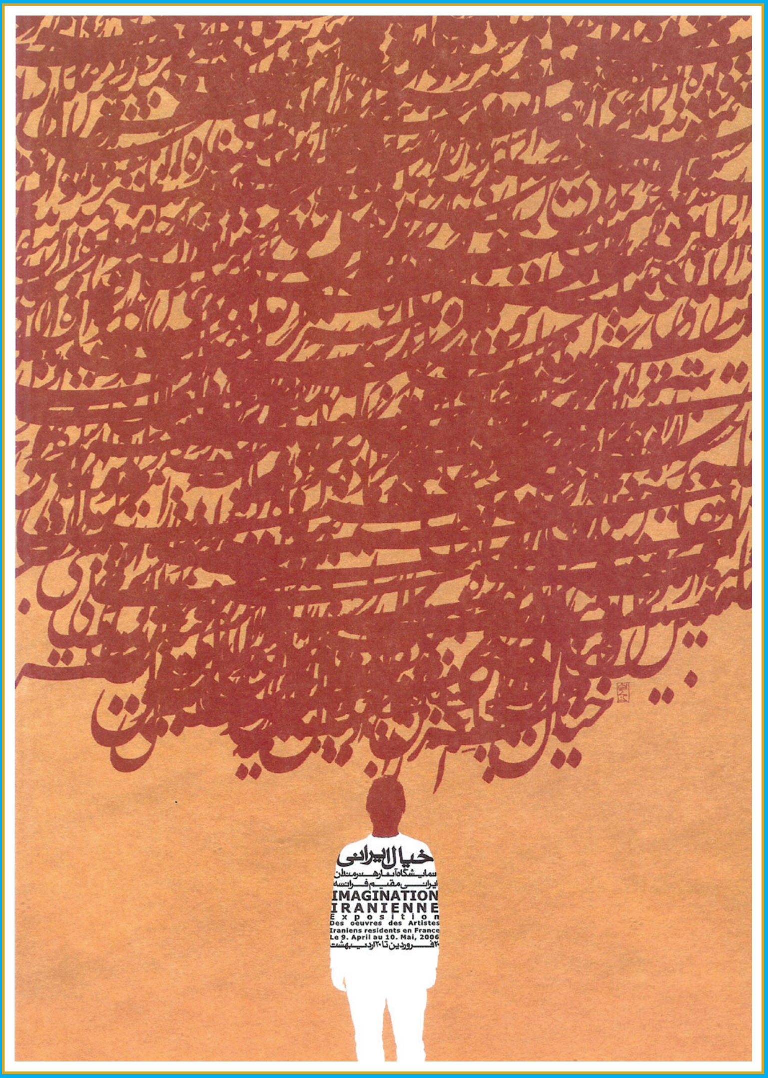


Fig. 29

Ridha Abdini



Fig. 30
Alssakkar



Fig. 31
Hakim Al-Ghazali

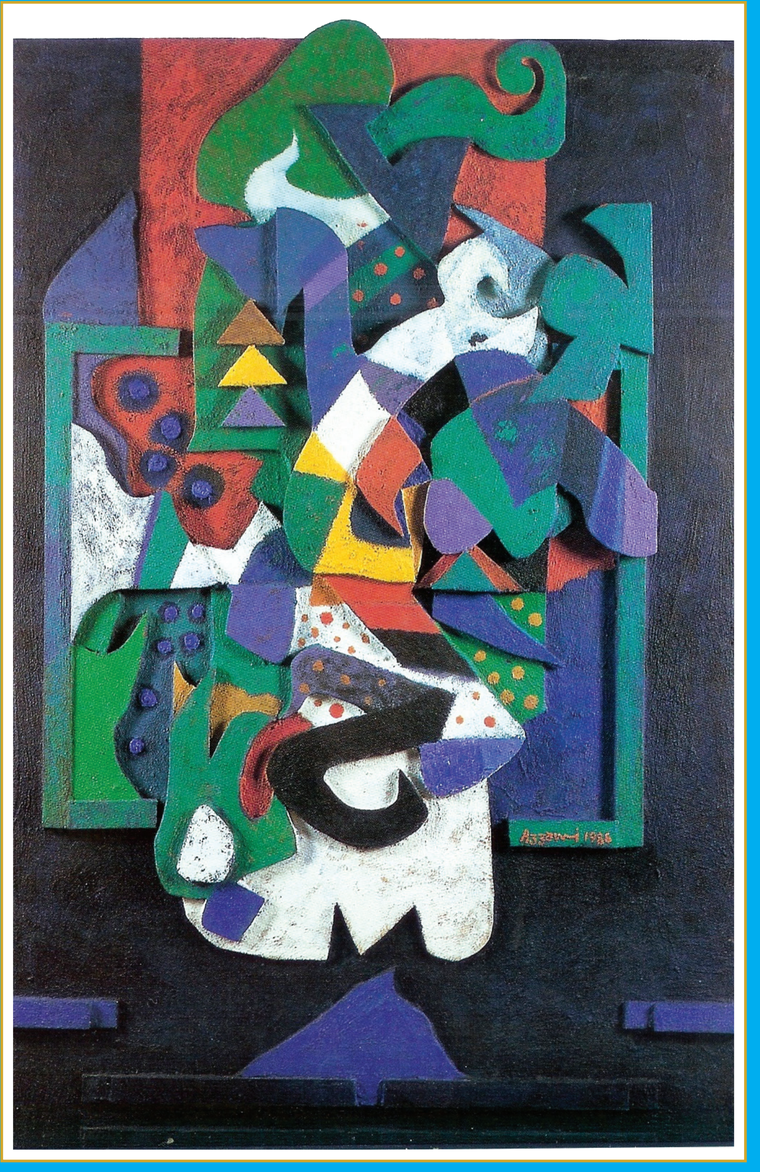


Fig. 32
Dia al-Azzawi

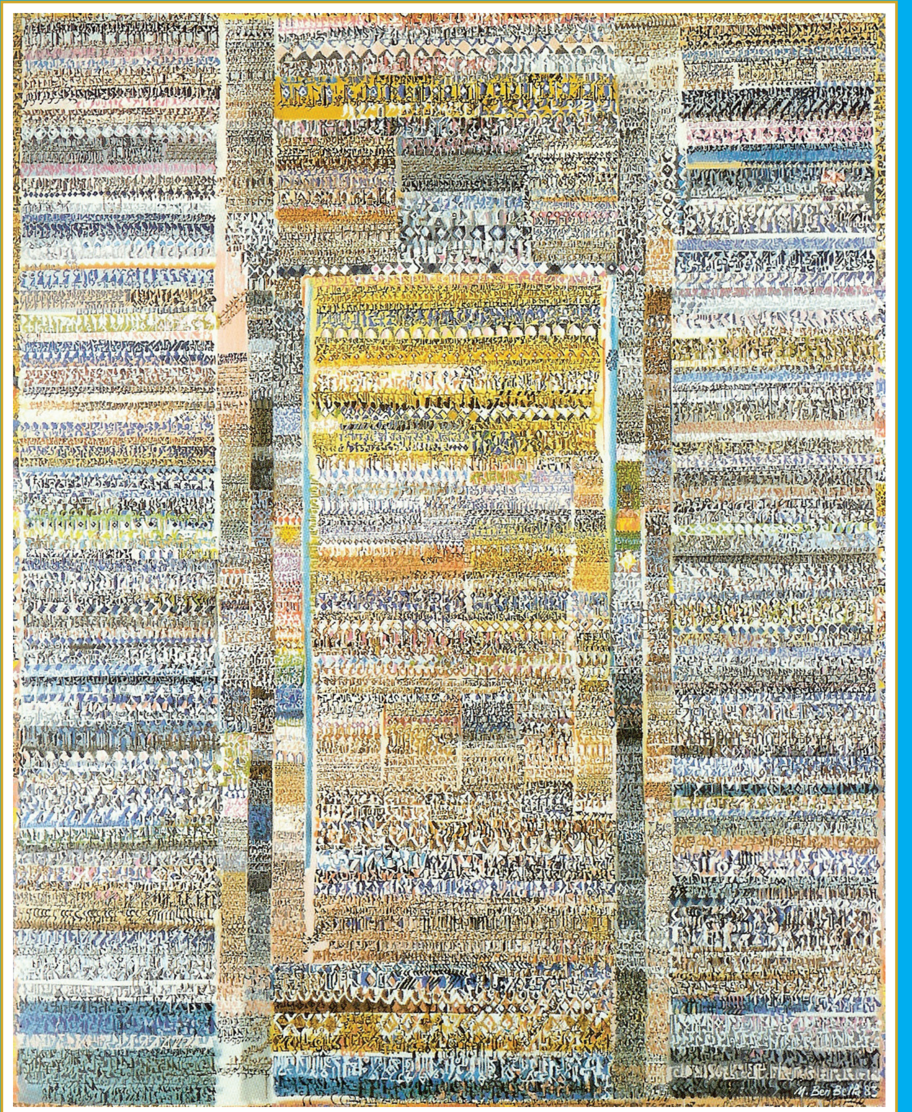


Fig. 33
Mahjoub Ben Bella



Fig. 34
Madiha Omar

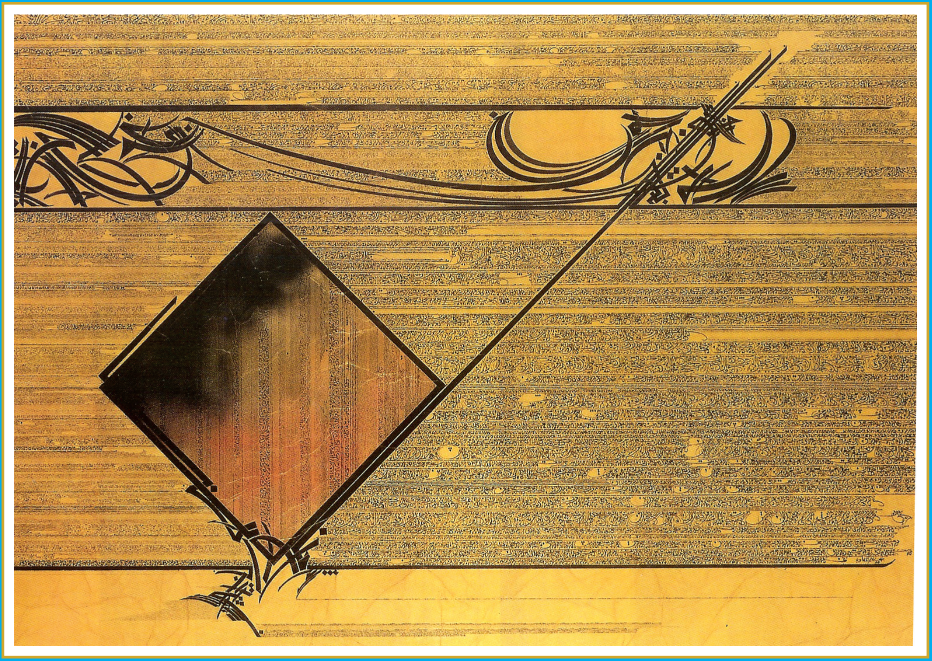


Fig. 35
Naja Al-Mahdawi



Fig. 36
Etel Adnan



Fig. 37
Shakir Hasan Al Said



Fig. 38

Naima Alshishini

Alwajd - group, - Oil painting on canvas



Fig. 39

Naima Alshishini
Alwajd- group , - Oil painting on canvas



Fig. 40
The Al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo



Fig. 41
The Umayyad Mosque in Damascus



Fig. 42
The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem

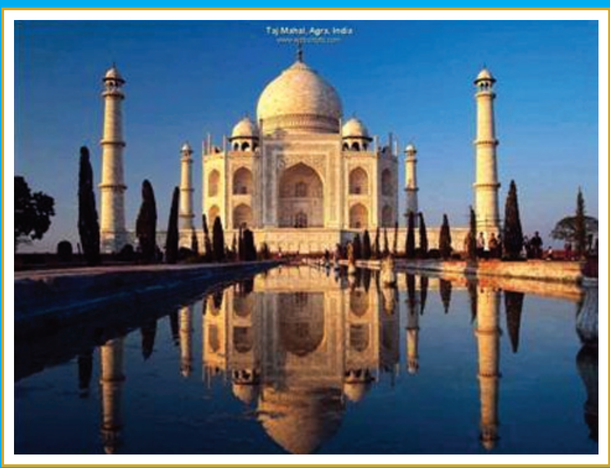


Fig. 43
Taj Mahal in India

Contant

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